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SELF-DETERMINATION AND MORAL CHARACTER:
ELEMENTS OF A THEORY OF IDENTIFICATION

by

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Self-Determination and Moral Character: Elements of a Theory of Identification

Thesis directed by Assistant Professor Claudia Mills

Fostering the self-determination of good moral character is a practical problem in need of theoretical insight. The notion of psychic identification, developed in the work of Harry Frankfurt and Gerald Dworkin, holds promise for improving our understanding of self-determination, but the notion has so far been characterized only thinly.

I offer some elements of a theory of identification and some practical recommendations for fostering the self-determination of good moral character in that theoretical light. I critically review Frankfurt's philosophical anthropology and propose some enhancements to it. I discuss Dworkin's notion of procedural independence, and recommend an alternative understanding of the privileged nature of the self that identifies. I conceive of the identifying self, at the phenomenological level, as a psychic referee which enjoys an epistemologically privileged position, not an ontologically privileged one. I offer a partial analysis of identification under such a conception as the authoritative, purposive commitment of the self to a particular way of being. Though many views of identification seem to presuppose that it is an explicit process, I maintain that it is often implicit, though it is nevertheless a sort of psychic activity. Identification is shown to ground self-regarding moral emotions.

After examining a model of moral education inspired by Daniel Callahan, I suggest that such an approach should be supplemented with experiential learning because such experiential learning can foster morally worthy identification.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We find the following story in Book IV of Plato's *Republic*:

Leontius, the son of Aglaion, was going up from the Piraeus along the outside of the North Wall when he saw some corpses lying at the executioner's feet. He had an appetite to look at them but at the same time he was disgusted and turned away. For a time he struggled with himself and covered his face, but, finally, overpowered by the appetite, he pushed his eyes wide open and rushed towards the corpses, saying, "Look for yourselves, you evil wretches, take your fill of the beautiful sight."¹

Leontius's case is famous, no doubt in part because his particular psychic conflict is on the peculiar side. But the rather complex formal nature of his inner conflict is familiar to most of us even as its content varies. Leontius can plausibly claim that, even though he wanted to look at the corpses, somehow that desire was not *his* desire. He can say, and the modern reader can appreciate, that though some part of him wants to look, he himself does not wish to. Perhaps even more intriguingly, he wishes he did not wish to look.

There are good practical motives for working to understand why such a claim might make philosophic sense. If we can understand how we relate to aspects of ourselves we might be able to understand how Leontius might go about turning himself into someone who not only does not look at the corpses, but who does not want to look at them. More generally, we might gain some insight into how people work to determine their characters. This practical aspect of my interest drives the theoretical inquiry that composes the bulk of the dissertation. I want to

¹ Plato, *Republic*, trans. G. M. A. Grube, revised by C. D. C. Reeve, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co., 1992) 115 (439e5-440a2).

work toward understanding self-determination at the level of theory so as to understand how we might foster efforts at the self-determination of moral character at the level of practice. In particular, I want to understand self-determination in order to understand how institutions might foster the self-determination of good moral character.

My interest in Leontius's case has nothing to do with the metaphysical interpretation of his desires and his will. Even if we could prove incontrovertibly that Leontius is wrong about what he "truly" desires that would do nothing to undermine what is interesting about Leontius, for what is interesting about Leontius is his psychology. The theoretical work that follows, then, should be understood as a way of coming to a heuristic for describing ourselves as we seem to ourselves. My project does not consider the metaphysics of free will and determinism nor is it meant to address directly the topic of personal autonomy. It is focused rather on the more modest, though arguably more fundamental, problem of improving our understanding of the philosophical psychology of self-determination.

A Broadbrush View of the Problem

The very notion of self-determination seems at first blush incoherent. We are accustomed to saying that we act out of or from our characters, and we expect a sort of behavioral consistency from one another. Indeed, if we could not in general predict one another's characteristic reactions to various events, we would have an extraordinarily difficult time getting along in the world. And yet, it seems possible to alter our characters in various ways, for better or for worse. We seem to be able to step out of our characters, take a look, and then work to determine ourselves into having a modified character. The incoherence has to do with

thinking that it is possible to break our own molds, so to speak, and recast ourselves. This seems to require being in two places at once. Yet we ordinarily think of the self as one. Indeed, we think of a split personality as in some way a psychological aberration. Still, self-determination seems to demand that there be more than one self. One self is needed to do the recasting, the other is needed to be recast. The idea of self-determination seems to be in some ways ludicrous just on the face of it.

Nevertheless it is not unusual for us to exercise self-determination. In fact, self-determination is commonplace. To take one simple everyday example, consider how many people exercise self-determination regarding the use of tobacco.

Any typical adolescent might begin smoking cigarettes. She might do this for a number of sociological reasons, but the causal story outside of the adolescent's mind is not what is of greatest interest here. Our focus is instead on the psychological process of self-determination. A teenager, believing that being a smoker is being sophisticated and mature, can determine herself to embody a disposition to smoke by beginning to smoke as though she were already a smoker. The initial distress her respiratory system suffers when confronted with cigarette smoke is, after her first few packs, replaced by a comforting sensation when she inhales the smoke. More, if she were to be deprived of her cigarettes for any period of time, she would be discomfited by symptoms of withdrawal. In short, she determines herself to become a smoker--she installs a new characteristic in herself by smoking her first few packs.

Moving forward in time a few years we might find that the same smoker regrets that she began smoking. That is, as an adult she now wishes to determine

herself in a way that would undo her previous self-determination. She does not wish merely for the force of will to win the struggle against the desire to smoke, she wishes to be rid of the desire to smoke. But ridding herself of the disposition to smoke is a much more difficult project than simply deciding that she does not want to be a smoker. Self-determination involves more than deciding what one "really" wants--it involves making the self into what one really wants to be. And this is likely to involve a conflict between two aspects of the self along much the same lines that we saw in Leontius. The smoker's characteristics seem to have a kind of psychic inertia that her attitudes do not. That is, adopting a pro-attitude toward smoking does not bring about a disposition to smoke. Rather, it takes actually smoking to do that. Then, in our example, a few years later the pro-attitude turns into a con-attitude. But the disposition to smoke seems to have a psychic life of its own. In spite of her con-attitude toward the disposition, our smoker still feels, somewhere inside, an urge to smoke. She feels that this disposition is not hers the way that her con-attitude is hers, but determining herself not to have it is not a simple matter of making a decision. She must determine herself to be a nonsmoker.

The Approach to a Solution

What this example and Leontius's suggest is that the human psyche can regard aspects of itself in some way which phenomenologically distinguishes the aspect regarded from the aspect doing the regarding. The self doing the determining is meaningfully different in some way from the self being determined. This sort of distinction seems to be key to making sense of the idea of self-determination. We can say that the self doing the determining is privileged over the self being determined because the latter is in some sense subject to evaluation and manipulation by the former. Thus our smoker might refer to her habit as something

she possesses but not something that is truly or really hers in the way that her desire to be rid of the habit is truly or really hers.

Before moving on, though, we should note that it is not clear that our smoker is not truly or really a smoker, regardless of what she says about her habit. It seems best to say that she really is a smoker but also really wants not to be a smoker. But even this is problematic, for she surely wants to smoke. Indeed, it is having that want that spurs her effort to determine herself to be different than she is. So it looks as if incoherence looms once again unless we can find a way of justifying the claim that she can want simultaneously what seem to be contradictory things. We might propose, then, that there are two selves: one which does the wanting to smoke, and another which is somehow more deeply the self, which wants to be rid of the self that wants to smoke. On this view the "shallow" self wants to smoke, but, from the perspective of the "deep" self, this desire is alien. This distinction may at first seem promising until we notice that such a scheme seems to have room for yet a deeper self which wishes that the deep self were psychologically dominant enough to crush the smoking self. A regress looms.

We thus have before us the project of understanding our smoker in a way that resolves the incoherence without sending us off on an infinite regress and which can explain how we might determine ourselves.

There is another way of characterizing our smoker. We might propose that a *split-level* self can account for the divergent desires by keeping them on different psychic planes within the single self. This does not let us say that she is "really" any more a smoker who wishes to quit than she is a smoker who wants to smoke, but it does move us from logical incoherence to mere inconsistency. Considered as a whole, the person contains inconsistent desires, and it is just this inconsistency that

seems to motivate some effort to determine the self in a way that reduces the inconsistency. The split-level self approach lets us understand that a person can have conflicting wants by placing those wants in different aspects of the person. This means that the smoker herself is in some sense disintegrated, but not incoherent in broad view. More, it seems at least at first to avoid the regress problem because it does not propose that there are multiple selves but rather only multiple aspects of one self. If we say this, then we can understand the project of self-determination as a project of self-integration. More, if we're able to show why some aspect of the self is privileged over another, then we might be able to make sense of the claim that what one wants at one level of the psyche is in fact a privileged sort of wanting. But even though we need not worry over a regress through deeper and deeper selves, we must still be careful to prevent a regress through planes of the single self. There must be some way of stopping the psychic buck. Our approach to making sense of self-determination, then, must make sense of the split-level conception of the self, and it must explain the final psychic privilege that seems to be enjoyed by some psychic entity when putting an end to psychic debate.

Before moving on into a more full-fledged orientation to the project, it is necessary to consider one more example of a conflicted person. Consider ordinary law student Jane who is well satisfied by the fact that she is by nature charitable to the impoverished. She likes the fact that she is disposed to help those in need, and, if queried, would say that it is a disposition she wants to maintain, or perhaps strengthen. But she also recognizes in herself a tendency to avoid confrontation, even to the point of permitting injustices she might have prevented. Jane feels as though her disposition to avoid conflict renders her unfree to meet the

requirements of justice despite the fact that she values it and wants to meet its demands. She routinely allows others to take unfair advantages, and she not only recognizes this as a defect of character, but she understands that it will likely hamper her from flourishing in her chosen profession. She feels trapped by her timidity because it frustrates her living as well as she might, not only in the professional arena but in the personal as well. She rebukes herself for having this defect--she actively *wants* not to have it, and this is Jane's final word on the subject, no matter how strongly her timidity tugs at her.

My particular interest is to understand how someone like Jane might go about changing herself. She will play a prominent role in what follows, for Jane's special characteristic is that she would like to exercise a specifically moral sort of self-determination.

Theory

I noted above that a good understanding of self-determination seems to require something along the lines of a split-level conception of human psychology. Fortunately there is a modern yet fairly well-developed split-level theory at hand. This is the conception of the human psyche developed primarily by Harry Frankfurt in the 1970s. Frankfurt proposes that we can possess desires that themselves are the objects of desires.² For example, Jane's desire to behave generously itself is desirable to Jane. Hence, her desire to give freely of her funds is a first-order desire, but her desire regarding that desire is a second-order desire. The latter is a second-order desire just because it regards another desire.

² Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," *Free Will*, ed. Gary Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982): 82-86.

In applying the scheme to the project of exploring self-determination, I will refer in the main to dispositions of various orders. These dispositions may be thought of as settled patterns of desires. Thus, Jane's settled generosity is a first-order disposition to be generous, and her second-order desire for that generous disposition is a second-order disposition to approve of her first-order disposition. These dispositions constitute much of a person's character, and as such, to modify one's dispositional array is to modify one's character.³

Of course, it is possible to disapprove of some desire or disposition. Jane's first-order timidity is the object of a second-order disposition that disapproves of it. Likewise, our smoker's first-order disposition is the object of second-order disapproval.

For a number of reasons which will not become fully clear until later, this hierarchical scheme by itself does not describe the split-level self as fully as is needed to handle all of our cases. We can gain some appreciation of why this is so if we think back to Leontius. We can now say that his is a case of second-order disapproval regarding his first-order disposition to view corpses. But there is more to it than that. Leontius sides with his second-order disapproval of his first-order disposition. He takes the second-order disapproval to be *his*, but the first-order disposition seems alien to him. Leontius wants to disown this latter disposition. He does not merely disapprove of it, he resoundingly, wholeheartedly, and finally disapproves of it. This finality precludes the psychic possibility of reconsidering his

³ Richard Brandt has offered an analysis (consistent with the view I take) of character traits as kinds of fairly permanent dispositions. See his "Traits of Character: A Conceptual Analysis," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 7 (1970): 23-37.

disapproval. This is a special feature of human psychology that Frankfurt uses in his model to preclude the regress we encountered earlier.

There is no theoretical limitation on the number of planes through which one might ascend, but there is a limit in practice. This is true for two reasons. The first is the relatively unimportant psychological fact that most of us lack the computing power to ascend more than a few levels. The more important fact is that in cases in which self-determination is involved, there will be a decision to stop any potential regress. Leontius's disapproval is a special disapproval in that it stops the psychic buck. This means that we need a more robust theoretical concept than the simple hierarchy alone makes available to us.

A concept is at hand in Frankfurt's work, though it first appeared in an article by Gerald Dworkin.⁴ This is the notion of psychic identification. When one identifies with a disposition she is putting herself behind that disposition. She is, so to speak, making that disposition her own. But when one identifies with a disapproving second-order disposition, then she is disavowing the first-order disposition that the second-order disposition regards. It is via this psychological process of identification that we declare some disposition to be welcome or unwelcome. Leontius, then, not only disapproves of the disposition to view the corpses, he identifies himself with that disapproval.

This means that identification must be described as being under the agent's authority in a way that having desires or dispositions is not. This is important because this distinction is much of what makes the notion of identification so appealing--Jane's active identification with the desire not to be disposed to timidity

⁴ Gerald Dworkin, "Acting Freely," *Nous* 4 (1970): 377-79.

seems to be *hers* in a way that the disposition is not. She possesses both her identification and her dispositions, but she seems to enjoy more direct and substantial authority over the former than the latter. At the very least, Jane thinks she is choosing her identifications regardless of whether she is as a matter of metaphysical fact doing so. Dispositions, by contrast, are like relatives; they are ours whether we choose them or not. Still, while we cannot directly choose whether to have them, we can choose whether to like having them.

The split-level self, then, is in some ways a misnomer, for the most interesting split is not so much between *levels* in a hierarchy as between those things that we ally ourselves with or square ourselves against and the self that does the allying or opposing. In other words, the interesting split is between those aspects of the self respecting which one might take a side, and the aspect of the self which takes a side.

When we identify, we are taking sides with one of the levels. Leontius, for example, is declaring himself to be opposed to his appetite when he identifies against it. This identification of course does not preclude his still possessing a disposition to look at corpses, because, while Leontius may have authority directly over his identifications, his authority over his dispositions is much less immediate.

But this is enough to start him on the road to self-determination, for it at least makes clear how Leontius, all things considered, wants to be as determined by his "final" self. It does not necessarily say anything about how he really is any more than to say he really wants not to want to want to look at corpses. But saying that is saying enough for self-determination to begin, for now Leontius has made clear how he really wants to be.

The Theoretical Problem

The concept of identification is critical to understanding self-determination. Likewise it is vital to the philosophical adequacy of Frankfurt's work, for it is where the critical split in the self lies. But unfortunately Frankfurt himself never gives any but the thinnest characterization of it.

This notion of identification is admittedly a bit mystifying, and I am unsure how to go about explicating it. In my opinion, however, it grasps something quite fundamental in our inner lives, and it merits a central role in the phenomenology and philosophy of human mentality.⁵

As will become more clear soon, it seems fair to say that identification is at the theoretical heart of the model, yet the model appeals to it without ever making clear just how it is supposed to work. Without a satisfactory in-depth explanation of the phenomenon of identification, there are reasons to be concerned over the concept's philosophic value. More, as identification is central to the model, the worth of the model as a whole is called into question by the apparently ethereal nature of identification. And of course if the model fails, this split-level approach to making sense of self-determination will be called into question.

There is a further problem ahead. It may be that there is no such thing as a coherent conception of identification that cannot be collapsed into some other sort of mental phenomenon. Indeed, it seems crucial to justify identification as a psychic kind *sui generis* especially given the seemingly similar higher-order dispositions that the model already contains. Consequently, the bulk of the

⁵ Harry Frankfurt, "Three Concepts of Free Action II," *Moral Responsibility*, ed. John Martin Fischer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986) 120.

theoretical work that follows will be concerned with the task of characterizing identification as a distinct psychic kind.

Part of what makes identifications special is the claim that they represent the deep self in a way that the objects of identification may not. This is what lets Leontius say that his desire to look at the corpses is alien to him in a way that his disapproval of that desire is not. But, even though this claim seems to make pretheoretical sense, explaining why it seems to is difficult. Gerald Dworkin has approached this problem via the notion of procedural independence, which requires that our choices be free of certain sorts of influences if they are to be "truly" our choices. But, like the concept of identification itself, procedural independence is characterized inadequately. Others, John Christman most notably, have attempted to provide an analysis of procedural independence. The most extensive efforts have focused on our evaluating the sources of our dispositions under the light of our own unvitiated critical reasoning. For example, our smoker might be able to claim that her disposition to smoke is not hers because she was bombarded with cigarette advertising and peer pressure when she was unable to resist these influences. Now, however, she can truthfully say that she would have objected at that time to those influences had she had the full reflective capability she has now as an adult.

The central problem with such an approach is that it courts a regress. We have no way of knowing whether our "true" critical faculties are truly ours. Our smoker's con-attitude toward her disposition to smoke is her present attitude, but that does not seem sufficient to reassure us that it is truly hers in a way that her present disposition to smoke is not hers. It might be that her identification against the disposition to smoke is nothing more than a result of her having been

bombarded with anti-smoking advertising and peer pressures among the adults with whom she now associates. We might suspect that because she holds the con-attitude fervently she blinds herself to the fact that she has been socialized into holding this attitude. Some explanation is required to justify the distinction between those influences which subvert our self-determination and those which do not. In the absence of such an explanation, we are unable to satisfy ourselves that we are not unduly influenced. Indeed, if there are many influences in our past to which we object now we should probably suspect that we are subject to undue influences at present. This is a serious problem, for, as I shall soon argue, even the most extensive analyses of procedural independence are inadequate to close off the potential for a regress.

There are therefore two sides to our central concern. The first is that identification, though it seems a wonderful way of helping us make sense of self-determination, is thus far inadequately characterized. The second aspect of the problem is that of explaining why the identifying aspect of the self is somehow more "truly" representative of the self than others.

My overall task at the level of theory is to supply what Frankfurt and Dworkin do not supply in order to rough out a theory of identification. Central to this enterprise is the defense of identification as a psychic kind *sui generis*. This means that other aspects of the psyche must be characterized well enough so that an effective theoretical wedge can be driven between identification and other seemingly similar mental phenomena which might masquerade as identifications. This will provide some of the philosophic solidity our current understanding of psychic identification lacks.

The Approach to the Theoretical Problems

First, I want to examine the Frankfurt-Dworkin model closely to determine whether it is a sound theoretical foundation for investigating both identification and self-determination. This task will be accomplished for the most part in Chapter II. It involves considering the major criticisms which have been leveled at the model in the literature and determining whether the model can be defended as it stands or whether modifications are required. In the main, though I of course grant that identification requires analysis, I will argue in defense of Frankfurt's contribution to the model. Nevertheless, I will offer some suggestions for improving it. I will also explore how the notion of procedural independence might be analyzed and will conclude that the notion should be abandoned for our purposes. This will require that I substitute a notion of my own to do the work of distinguishing the "true" self from "alien" aspects of it. I will characterize such a distinction at the level of philosophical psychology and adopt it, along with the modifications to the FD model, as my working paradigm. Closing off the problem of analyzing procedural independence will help clear the way for the theoretical heart of the project, which will be found in the main in Chapter IV. This is to characterize identification as a distinct psychic kind.

Three associated projects will be undertaken in Chapter III. The first involves locating identification in the rest of the psyche and exploring how it relates to other psychological aspects of the self. In order to do this it will be necessary first to give a more robust description of identification in its various guises. This will constitute one end of a thematic thread that runs through the entire dissertation, for it will be important to understand the different ways in which identification may be manifested if we are to give an adequate

characterization of it. In Chapter III, in particular, I will consider the various ways that identification may relate to dispositions of various orders. I will propose that the FD model should include a provision for identifying directly against dispositions rather than requiring an identification with a second-order disapproval of a first-order disposition. I will propose as well that the model should allow identification with dispositions that are only possible as a way by which dispositions might be imported into the psyche. I will also discuss how identifications vary in terms of their deliberateness. This will begin another thread that will continue through the dissertation regarding the extent to which identifications must be objects of explicit reflection.

The second major project of Chapter III will be to characterize dispositions as a class. This is another part of paving the way for the central project of characterizing identification as a distinct psychic kind. In order to do this I will rely on Gilbert Ryle's conception of dispositions in *The Concept of Mind*, though certain differences between Ryle's behaviorist perspective and my own will be noted. In particular, I will argue for the existence of purely mental episodes which have a transitive relationship to our dispositions. For example, I want to establish that episodes of introspection can strengthen a disposition to introspect, and that this same introspective disposition will make episodic introspection more likely.

The nature of higher-order dispositions will be of particular importance, for they are the mental phenomena most likely to camouflage identifications. This is because higher-order dispositions are evaluative of lower-order dispositions. For example, Jane's second-order disapproval of her first-order timidity seems to be just what does the work of splitting the self. We are especially likely to think that this is so because of nomenclature like "split-level" and "higher" order, because

these convey a sense of privilege to the higher-order dispositions. But I will show that there is nothing about a disposition's being at a particular order that makes it any more or less alien to us. That is, it is altogether possible to have higher-order dispositions from which we wish to distance ourselves.

The last major project in Chapter III will once again start a thematic thread--this time involving the relationship of reason to identification. There is no controversy over whether we require some rational capacity to identify, but I want to investigate whether there is anything about the concept of identification that demands that identifications be reasonable. I will argue that reason is instrumental to identifying well, but that nothing precludes unreasonable identifications. Self-determination can do harm as well as good for our characters, not to say our lives. If we think back to our teen smoker, we cannot say that she begins to smoke because she has no rational capacity. It is plainly the case that she is able to make the bad decision to smoke. There are no grounds for denying that she has a rational capacity. But there are grounds for saying that she made an unwise decision to begin smoking. This implies that if we are to develop our characters for the better we should identify as wisely as possible.

Chapter IV is the core of the project. In it I want to come to a characterization of identification as a species of commitment respecting the self, thereby helping to distinguish it from other mental phenomena with which it might be confused. Though when we think of identification we tend to think of explicit cases like Leontius's or Jane's, I will argue that identifications need not be explicit. Indeed, though it is tempting to use the wedge of explicitness in order to distinguish identification from higher-order dispositions, I will argue that we should resist this temptation. Accordingly, much of this chapter is devoted to

comparing two views of identification, one of which requires identifications to be explicit while the other contains no such requirement. I hope to show that identification is active in a sense that possessing dispositions is not, yet also to maintain that this active nature of identification does not imply that identifications must always occur explicitly. This task is especially delicate given the difficulty of discussing an implicit psychic phenomenon. Nevertheless, I will attempt to show that identifications, though they may be implicit, are nevertheless kinds of involvement or participation in the self in a way that other seemingly similar phenomena, such as caring, are not. Doing so effectively will drive a wedge home between identification and higher-order dispositions with which they might be confused. More importantly, providing a partial characterization of identification will buttress the FD model where it is weakest and will enable us to explain efforts at self-determination more adequately.

In a closely related project, I hope to show that identifications need not be present to mind in order to be identifications, but that it is characteristic of identifications that we cannot hide them from ourselves. One way of demonstrating this is to explore the role identifications play in grounding self-regarding moral emotions. This task is delicate as well, for it seems an obvious characteristic of higher-order dispositions that they regard the self in some evaluative fashion. Nonetheless, the nature of the regard is sufficiently narrow that they can be distinguished effectively from identifications.

That identification seems to ground self-regarding moral emotions suggests that identifications respecting moral character are intertwined with moral motivation. Though moral motivation is not my focus, I will discuss the remarkable influence of moral motivations over our self-determination of moral

character. Logically speaking, Leontius could resolve his conflict by disavowing his second-order disapproval. He could identify himself with his disposition to view the corpses. Likewise, Jane could embrace her timidity and ally herself against the hold that the demands of justice seem to exert over her. Yet in both cases, identification is carried out with an eye not just to integrating the self, but to determining it for the better. I will consider briefly some proposals for helping us to understand morality's influence. More, I will argue that even in the face of such influence, we maintain authority over our identifications that we do not enjoy over our dispositions.

The Practical Application

My focus on moral psychology is couched in a more broad interest in the areas of moral education and ethics generally. Accordingly, my project relies on two normative underpinnings. First, I hold that the ability to determine oneself is valuable. Second, I maintain that self-determination which accords with certain moral virtues is desirable on functional grounds even if it is desirable on no others.

Though the theoretical portion of the dissertation should be relevant for anyone interested in identification, my practical concerns focus specifically on moral education aimed at fostering character development in the professions. There are a number of reasons for this interest, but several are worth mentioning here. First, I have had experience with character development efforts within the military, and so my background lends itself to work in that professional arena. Second, working with a focus on the professions simplifies providing a conception of what a good character is. This is because functional requirements justify a demand for good character and its self-determination within the professions even if they may not justify it elsewhere. None of this is to suggest that the practical

implications of a theory of identification apply only to professional schools, but it is to say that I have professional schools in mind as I write.

Professions are distinct from occupations in part because professionals serve specialized functions which are fundamental necessities for a society's survival. Likewise, the embodiment of certain moral dispositions is necessary for professionals to perform their functions well. An example may help make this clear.

Military service is a profession in a way that selling cars is not in part because security is central to a society's well being in a way that new cars are not. We can think of many societies that flourished in the absence of cars but it is difficult to think of many that flourished in the absence of decent security. Just as security is necessary for a society's functioning, so certain moral characteristics are functional necessities to the military profession. For example, honesty is a functional necessity for military professionals because no military unit can perform its function well in the absence of mutual trust and faith among the members of the unit. And, while it may seem that selecting members of the profession for just such a trait would be sufficient to guarantee that the profession would be staffed with people embodying honesty, such selectivity is in fact not sufficient. Even if we could accurately measure the character of candidates desiring to enter into a profession, there is no guarantee that characters remain stable over a professional career. What is needed is the ability for the members to determine themselves in such a way as to bring about the appropriate dispositions in themselves. More, self-determination is always to some degree a private project. No institution, not even one with as much seeming control over the lives of its members as the military is often purported to have, can force a change in character for the better.

Individual professionals have to participate in the development of their own characters.

Now, the teamwork and self-sacrifice required by the military profession may seem to make it unique, but all of the commonly recognized professions require members who embody certain moral virtues and who can exercise a certain degree of self-determination to strengthen their moral characters. Indeed, it is probably not too much to say that professions suffering from a poor public image suffer from that image in part just because their members are not believed to embody the relevant virtues. The self-determination of moral character is of especial import for those professionals whose moral character is inadequate to the function society demands of them.

The professions I have in mind in addition to the military which demand a certain standard of moral character include among others medicine, education, law, and the clergy. Whatever other normative assumptions we might make about what sort of character we should strive to develop, there can be no question that certain moral character traits are justified as functional necessities to providing these professional services. For our purposes then there is nothing complex about the goal of character development. It should be to encourage character that is consistent with serving the relevant needs of others. And there is nothing especially esoteric about such a character. Though each profession might include dispositions that are special for its functioning--the military might include a special requirement for physical courage; medicine a requirement for special compassion; education for uncommon patience, etc.--for the most part the moral characteristics that are functional necessities in the professions are the same virtues appropriate to everyone, such as honesty and accountability. For a professional, though, part of

being competent is performing in accordance with the demands of ordinary moral standards.

A person with good character is a person who has an array of dispositions that tend to lead her to behave, more or less effortlessly, in accordance with well-established moral precepts. Ideally, professional schools will produce graduates who embody these necessary virtues. Even more important, though, is the ability for a professional to strengthen in herself the dispositions that her profession demands, while weakening those dispositions which might inhibit her performing her function well. Hence, for our law student Jane, determining herself to be less timidly disposed is a professional imperative as well as a moral imperative. Likewise, a physician may be faced with a disposition to place her own needs over those of her patient, and, as such, is faced with a problem in moral character that is also a problem in professionalism. The profession of medicine demands that she take steps to determine her moral character for the better even if there were no independent demands made upon her by morality itself. Practical efforts to foster character development are consequently justified on functional grounds for professional education even if they are not justified (and I believe they are justified) in education generally.

Of course this is not to say that the project will be irrelevant for those outside of the professions. Most parents and many institutions are interested in fostering healthy self-determination in their charges. We *want* our children or students to determine themselves in certain way. More, we want them to do so *for their own good*, in part because we believe that such self-determination facilitates living well. Put another way, we hope that our charges will determine themselves

along particular moral lines--that they develop into persons who do not "need to be told."

Chapter V is the only chapter devoted especially to the practical problem of fostering good character development. In that chapter I will discuss two approaches to moral education which rely on differing views of moral motivation. The narrow view under consideration represents the cognitive-developmental approach most closely associated with Lawrence Kohlberg and his followers. Most institutions that teach ethics seem to ally themselves with this approach, which concentrates specifically on developing moral reasoning skills. For Kohlberg and his followers, the development of a morally good character is in its essence the development of good moral cognition. This suggests that classroom techniques focused on the development of good moral reasoning are in the main sufficient for the development of character. In order to see this approach in the best possible light, I will outline an idealized ethics class that is based on the cognitive developmental tradition, but which is also conceived well enough to hedge its bets in terms of moral motivation. That is, the course will straddle the question of whether moral reasons themselves are morally motivating. The model course is constructed in the hope that they are, but with the understanding that they might not be.

This narrow approach is contrasted with an approach that includes it but adds a component of experiential learning. This approach involves the entire institutional community in that it calls for an honor code. This code will have a system of sanctions accompanying it in order to encourage the practice of honest behavior. The idea of adding this element of practice to the purely cognitive approach is simply to take advantage of the power of first-person experience. I will

argue that first-person experience can result not only in certain kinds of cognitive results, but also in affective ones that can encourage self-determination that improves moral character. The broad approach does not deny the power of the cognitive-developmental approach, but it adds to it an element by which students might learn to enjoy having certain dispositions through acting as though they did have them.

I want to be sure not to raise expectations unduly. One of the essential elements of understanding self-determination is understanding that everyone must determine themselves. That is, institutions may be able to foster moral growth, but they can never cause someone to grow. Failing to appreciate this can lead to ill-conceived efforts to bring about good character which do more harm than good. For example, if an institution were to attempt to inculcate good character exclusively through using a rigid system of supervision and sanctions, it seems likely that the students would become very good at avoiding the sanctions but would quite plausibly develop worse characters than they had before matriculation. Indeed, such shortsighted institutional practices could impart the impression that good character *is* avoiding sanctions. It is one thing to create an institution in which good *behavior* is fostered, another to foster *character* development. The latter effort must be crafted with the knowledge that students ultimately have to learn to value morally worthy dispositions for themselves if they are to endorse them as part of themselves. Like all learning, it cannot be forced.

Summary

I am interested in the practical matter of fostering the self-determination of good moral character. My interest in self-determination drives an interest in the FD model of the human psyche. That model seems promising but for two closely

related defects. First, we have no adequate characterization of the nature of identification. We do not know how it does the work it is purported to do. Second, we have no way of understanding just what it is that makes the identifying self psychically privileged over any other aspects. If identification respecting dispositions is somehow under our authority in a way that the dispositions themselves are not, then we need some account of why this is so. I shall now begin those tasks.

CHAPTER II

THE FRANKFURT-DWORKIN MODEL

The theoretical groundwork for my project has been developed in the main by Harry Frankfurt and Gerald Dworkin. Frankfurt's major contribution for my purposes has been in the field of philosophical anthropology, while Dworkin's work has focused on generating a conception of autonomy. Though their approaches differ somewhat, taking their work jointly gives us a strong foundation upon which to proceed. Accordingly, I shall refer to their schematic of our relationships to our dispositions as the Frankfurt-Dworkin, or FD, model. I want to show that the FD model can function as a good heuristic for the investigation of self-determination and character development. In particular, I want to show that the model, though inchoate, is in general defensible as a starting point for the central theoretical project: to investigate the phenomenon of identification. With that end in mind I will lay out the FD model in detail in this chapter. I will examine the model, considering both the most significant criticisms raised against it in the literature and a few of my own. I will show that the model as it stands can be defended against some of the criticisms leveled against it. I will also identify areas in which I believe that the model requires improvement, and I will suggest appropriate modifications to strengthen it.

This chapter is composed of two sections which, between them, should be adequate to cover the most important controversies in the literature as well as some of my own concerns. The first will treat the hierarchical approach to philosophical anthropology, developed in the main by Frankfurt. I will consider objections to the hierarchical approach and defend it against them. The second will treat Dworkin's major contribution--the notion of procedural independence. That

section will discuss certain difficulties which plague the notion and will propose an alternative approach to avoid them.

The Hierarchical Scheme

As noted in Chapter I, the FD model classifies desires⁶ that humans may experience into a hierarchical scheme of various orders. In this section I want to discuss the hierarchical scheme in much greater detail.

First-order desires are ordinary desires to do or to avoid doing. According to the model we cannot directly control their emerging onto the psychic landscape, though we can often control whether we indulge any particular one of them.⁷ For example, Jack has a first-order desire to eat chocolate ice cream. He has another first-order desire, however, to avoid heart disease. These conflicting desires are only part of the story, for Jack may have second-order desires which regard his first-order desires.⁸ In our example, Jack happens to disapprove, at the second-order, of his first-order affinity for ice cream, while he approves of his first-order desire to avoid heart disease.

But it seems that Jack could have conflicting second-order desires just as he has conflicting first-order desires. He may, for example, desire to desire to live

⁶ I am interested in dispositions, as opposed to desires. But, while Frankfurt often refers to desires, it seems clear that dispositions fit the model comfortably. As will become evident, Frankfurt himself often seems to have dispositions in mind when he refers to desires. Frankfurt, "Freedom" 82-83.

⁷ It may be that there is no theoretical constraint precluding our always controlling whether we indulge even the most insistent dispositions. I am put in mind of hunger strikers.

⁸ Frankfurt, "Freedom" 82.

for the moment, yet also desire to desire to eat less. The hierarchical scheme appears to invite a regress requiring third-order desires, and so on.⁹ The FD model anticipates this concern, however, and averts the regress by way of *decisive identification*. Jack, having considered the likely effects of ice cream on his longevity, chooses that overall he would prefer to act in accordance with his second-order disapproval of his first-order desire to eat ice-cream. Jack has made his decision, and in this case this desire is reflected by his behavior. Jack avoids chocolate ice cream despite the fact that he desires to eat it; those aspects of his psyche that tug him toward a divergent path of action do so as an alien force. There will be no further psychic discussion as to what Jack *wants* (though there may be a lot over how he *acts*). Decisive identification is decisive; the possibility of a regress is cut away. As Frankfurt put it in 1971, when he first published his scheme, "When a person identifies himself *decisively* with one of his first-order desires, this commitment 'resounds' throughout the potentially endless array of higher orders."¹⁰ In a more recent article Frankfurt has clarified the notion of resonance. "[T]he person who makes it [a decisive identification] does so in the

⁹ Susan Wolf has noted that while there is no theoretical limit to the number of orders through which one might ascend, "there is certainly a psychological limit." "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility," *Responsibility, Character, and the Emotions*, ed. Ferdinand Schoeman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 52.

¹⁰ Frankfurt, "Freedom" 91.

belief that no further accurate inquiry would require him to change his mind. It is therefore pointless to pursue the inquiry any further."¹¹

It should be pointed out that for Frankfurt identifications may sometimes be less than "wholehearted." As it is possible to have equally attractive higher-order desires, identification with either of them may be less than wholehearted if the two desires are mutually exclusive. There may be good, but still not compelling reasons to identify with either of a contradictory pair. In Frankfurt's words, this lack of wholeheartedness

has to do with the possibility that there is no unequivocal answer to the question of what the person really wants. . . . There might be no unequivocal answer because the person is *ambivalent* with respect to the object he comes closest to really wanting: . . . [H]e is drawn not only toward it, but away from it too.¹²

There is no question that we sometimes experience such ambivalence, but Frankfurt's suggestion that ambivalence renders *identification* less than wholehearted is problematic for at least two reasons. The first has to do with the compatibility of the notion of identification with the notion of ambivalence at the level of psychic life. Just as is the case with any commitment, any identification made less than wholeheartedly is made with mental reservations. But it is precisely such reservations that we put a stop to when we identify. One may be ambivalent coming to an identification, but identification is itself a way of putting a practical end to ambivalence in our minds. This is not to say that identification only goes on

¹¹ Harry Frankfurt, "Identification and Wholeheartedness," *Responsibility, Character, and the Emotions*, ed. Ferdinand Schoeman, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 37.

¹² Frankfurt, "Identification" 33.

when we are *certain* that we are making the best possible identification, but it is to say that further psychic discussion is irrelevant to the decision at hand. Just as a child who takes an oath with her fingers crossed behind her back is taking no oath at all, so a less than wholehearted identification is no identification at all. The phenomenon of identification is a wholehearted phenomenon.

The second problem is at the level of theory: it has to do with the impact allowing identifications to be less than wholehearted has on the FD scheme itself. Frankfurt's suggestion is mistaken at the theoretical level because the notion of identification must entail wholeheartedness if it is to do the job of preventing a regress. Yet an identification that is made with reservations is subject to psychic review just by virtue of those reservations, and as such the regress looms once again.¹³

We can evade these problems if we take Frankfurt's concerns over ambivalence as pertaining only to the reasons behind, or the justifications for, identification. For our purposes, then, identification will be considered always to imply wholehearted or decisive identification.

It is clear under the FD model that identification is more than a psychic shunt to avoid a regress through orders of desire or dispositions: it is different in kind from just another order of desire. It is entirely possible to act in accordance

¹³ This is not to suggest that we never experiment with our lives. We can make commitments which we later revise. Most identifications are made in the face of some uncertainty, and few if any are irrevocable. But it is important to note that while uncertainty may sometimes characterize the reasons behind an identification, identification itself is not an uncertain act any more than a commitment to pay off a debt made upon borrowing money can be an uncertain act. There is neither borrowing nor commitment without wholeheartedness.

with dispositions without ever identifying with any of them, but if one identifies with a disposition, one is not merely acting in accordance with it. Instead, one is *endorsing* that disposition as a member in good standing of the psychic community, whether or not that disposition leads to any action. Jack's psychic equilibrium therefore is not merely the product of the relative forces of competing dispositions. It is, at least in part, a product of what mental endorsements or (as will soon become clear) rejections Jack makes in the face of the array of dispositions with which he is faced. Though in any case he possesses all of his dispositions, Jack may decide whether to embrace or distance himself from any of them through the act of identification.

According to Frankfurt, decisive identification is choosing which desires one wishes to have translated into effective motives for action.¹⁴ Unlike dispositions, which we seem in the main to "find" in ourselves, identification seems to be a sort of psychic participation or involvement. Though one can "disown" dispositions, one can never disown an identification. It is not too much to say that identifying is a way of declaring psychic ownership over dispositions which otherwise we would only possess passively.

When Jack decides that he would like to have some desire lead him all the way to action, he forms a second-order volition out of a first or second-order desire.¹⁵ If this second-order volition is effective, that is, if it leads all the way to

¹⁴ See Frankfurt, "Identification" 33ff. Also, Frankfurt, "The Faintest Passion," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 66: 3 (Nov, 1992): 5-16.

¹⁵ Frankfurt, "Freedom" 86.

action, it is, in Frankfurt's terminology, Jack's will.¹⁶ A second-order volition, then, is nothing more than wanting to have a certain will. Decisive identification then is choosing what will one wants to have; it is the psychic act of stopping the buck.

Frankfurt believes that the ability to form second-order *volitions* is a necessary condition of personhood. If one does not enjoy this capability, which boils down to the capability to identify with or against some desire, then one is, in Frankfurt's terminology, a "wanton." Those lacking such an ability include "all non-human animals that have desires and all very young children." Certain adults may be wantons, and we all may behave more or less as wantons insofar as we have no second-order volitions regarding first-order desires.¹⁷

But in those cases in which we do identify it seems clear that, for Frankfurt, identification represents the person as she "really" is in a way that merely having certain dispositions or desires does not. He illustrates this by contrasting two drug addicts.¹⁸ One of them desires his first-order desire to lead him to inject the drug. His identification with the desire to take the drug thereby creates a second-order volition for taking it. This identification makes him a willing addict.

In virtue of a person's identification of himself with one of his own second-order desires, that desire becomes a second-order volition. And the person thereby *takes* responsibility for the pertinent first- and second-order desires and for the actions to which these desires lead him.¹⁹

¹⁶ Frankfurt, "Freedom" 84.

¹⁷ Frankfurt, "Freedom" 86-87.

¹⁸ Frankfurt, "Freedom" 88 and 94-95.

¹⁹ Frankfurt, "Freedom" 119-20.

He would, of course, take the drug even if he opposed the addiction with a second-order volition because, for Frankfurt, addiction renders the will unfree.²⁰ In other words, Frankfurt's addict cannot do otherwise than to take the drug, but he can choose whether to be a willing or unwilling addict. Though this aspect of Frankfurt's work seems to be intended to erect a defense of compatibilism (he uses this example to show that one can be morally responsible even if one's will is not free),²¹ the crucial dimension of his case for our purposes lies in the fact that two persons may have similar dispositions but radically different attitudes regarding those dispositions. Consider another individual who also is addicted to heroin. Unlike the willing addict, she has a second-order desire, with which she identifies, to be drug-free. The behavior of the two addicts is interchangeable, as are their first-order dispositions. But their identifications are obviously quite different. Even if the first-order dispositions are for some reason unalterable (as Frankfurt seems to believe is the case with addiction), it still seems correct to say that there are important differences in the characters of the two addicts which can be attributed to their identifications. In Frankfurt's words,

The unwilling addict identifies himself . . . through the formation of a second-order volition, with one rather than with the other of his conflicting first-order desires. He makes one of them more truly his own and, in so

²⁰ I am uncomfortable with Frankfurt's appeal to the example of addiction, for addiction seems to contain a physical or biological aspect which arguably makes it disanalogous to cases involving phenomena we commonly consider to be more purely psychic, such as a disposition toward timidity or generosity. Still, if we can for now overlook the physical attributes of addiction, Frankfurt's example is useful both for illustrating the phenomenon of identification itself as well as the role it plays in our assessment of character.

²¹ Frankfurt, "Freedom" 94.

doing, he withdraws himself from the other. It is in virtue of this identification and withdrawal, accomplished through the formation of a second-order volition, that the unwilling addict may meaningfully make the analytically puzzling statements that the force moving him to take the drug is a force other than his own, and that it is not of his own free will but rather against it that this force moves him to take it.²²

Though we may question whether the force in question really is other than the addict's own, the important point for our purposes is that the distinction is not made in the sphere of physical action, but rather with regard to the attitude the addicts take toward their desires for the drug. The fact that the unwilling addict identifies with the second-order desire to be drug-free distinguishes her from the willing addict in spite of their having identical addictions. For Frankfurt, the willing addict "really" is an addict, but the unwilling addict "really" is not. Moving back to our example, we would say that Jane is an unwillingly timid person. But her husband, Sam, may be excessively timid and *approve* of his timidity. Though Sam and Jane may display similar behaviors, there is an important difference in their respective psychologies. The FD model reflects the distinction between the two, though it does not make clear just how this distinction is to be understood. The FD model is frustratingly vague regarding the precise nature of identification as a psychic act *sui generis*, and it is of course my task to render it less vague.

The Explanatory Power of Hierarchical Representations

Any model purporting to represent aspects of human psychology is apt to have its imperfections. But imperfection does not imply uselessness. Though I have some concerns of my own to offer later, it is first necessary to consider some of the more powerful criticisms of the FD model in the literature.

²² Frankfurt, "Freedom" 88.

The most fundamental objection to the scheme is directed against the incorporation of a hierarchy in the first place. Irving Thalberg has criticized the FD model as otiose, particularly in comparison to a more economical model of dispositions operating on a single plane. Thalberg's criticism, in brief, focuses on whether we need to incorporate higher-order approval/disapproval of our dispositions at all to account for the psychic facts of life. The objection does not consider the phenomenon of identification but rather the hierarchical scheme in which identification occurs. Thalberg sees no use for a hierarchy of desires for he holds that it is really just acts themselves of which we approve or disapprove. And if this is so, then there is certainly no need for a hierarchical scheme such as that proposed in the FD model. Indeed, if a simpler, more accurate model is available, the hierarchical scheme is needlessly cumbersome.

I grant that Thalberg's criticism is persuasive against certain applications of the hierarchical scheme. But this is not enough to undermine the model for there are cases in our lives which his simplistic approach cannot accommodate accurately.

Thalberg begins his objection by reference to certain of Dworkin's and Frankfurt's cases involving coerced action.²³ If we think of the classic case of a bank teller who hands over money due to the threats of an armed bank robber, it seems that we intuitively think of the teller's act as unfree. Thus, according to Thalberg, the FD model would lead us to expect that the teller should experience

²³ Though Thalberg begins his criticism of the hierarchical scheme by citing Dworkin's claim that we 'resent acting for certain reasons' in cases of coercion, it seems plain that his target is hierarchical analyses of conation in general. Irving Thalberg, "Hierarchical Analyses of Unfree Action," *The Inner Citadel*, ed. John Christman (New York: Oxford, 1989) 125-26.

some higher-order disapproval of her lower-order desire to avoid suffering physical harm from the robber. But this is not the case. We do not find that the teller has a second-order desire to avoid giving in to the threat. Most of us would do just as the teller did (bank robbers, whatever else they may be, plainly seem to be cognizant of this fact). Indeed, in the case of a teller who rebuked herself for giving in to the threat, we would be inclined to counsel against such self-rebuke. In other words, we can think of a case in which we can say that someone acted against her will without having a second-order disposition opposing her desire to avoid being harmed by the robber. Yet, according to Thalberg, the FD model would predict that there must be a second-order volition opposing the teller's desire to remain unharmed. For Thalberg, this shows that the FD model is inadequate.

Thalberg is correct in his understanding of a victim's dispositions in this sort of coercive case, but his attempt to use it to undermine the FD model is ineffective. Frankfurt has provided a careful analysis of just such a case and has shown it to be compatible not only with the common-sense intuitions Thalberg correctly notes, but also with his hierarchical model.

Frankfurt has divided cases of action "against one's will" into three types which he labels A, B, and C. Type A acts are typified by having to choose when no good options are available. An agent must choose, but says that he does not want to take any of the available options. According to Frankfurt, "the person's feeling that he acted unwillingly derives from the fact that the external circumstances under which he acted were, as he perceived them, discordant with his desires."²⁴

²⁴ Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 113.

But for Frankfurt, even though the agent does not approve of the options with which he is faced, it is still possible to say that he acted as he "wanted" to, because he chose the act he preferred even granting that it was chosen from "a set from which he did not want to choose."²⁵ We can pass over the question of whether Frankfurt is correct about his agent's wants, for the crucial distinction he makes is between the case in which one acts unwillingly on account of *external* circumstances and those cases in which one acts unwillingly but accounts for the act in terms of *internal* (intrapsychic) circumstances.²⁶ These latter cases are labeled Type B and might be exemplified by a kleptomaniac who steals only because she is a kleptomaniac. If we think of someone who is compulsively driven to shoplift (and who indeed wishes that she suffered from no such compulsion), we can understand the distinction Frankfurt is trying to make. The kleptomaniac is helpless in a way that the agent faced with an unpleasant set of options is not. Being compulsively driven is different from having to choose from a set of undesirable options just because compulsive forces are psychic forces.

For Frankfurt, the case of the coerced teller is neither of type A nor of type B, but is instead a third type, Type C. To understand why, consider how he conceives of coercion: "[A] threat is not coercive when the threatened person believes correctly that he can defy it if he chooses to do so. For in that case the action he performs if he submits to the threat will be one to which he thinks he has an alternative."²⁷ Whether the victim *can* defy the compulsion is the crucial

²⁵ Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 114.

²⁶ Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 119-20.

²⁷ Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 115.

question in determining whether an act is genuinely a coerced act, and determining that depends on knowing what an agent can and cannot do in the face of certain intrapsychic forces. For Frankfurt, coercion requires a particular sort of interaction between one's internal and external circumstances. "Coercive threats . . . involve penalties that the recipient of the threat cannot effectively choose to incur. His inclination to avoid the undesirable consequences he faces is irresistible; it is impossible for him to bring himself to accept that consequence."²⁸ A coercive threat must force an agent into compliance by putting her between a rock and a hard place. Coercion works by using external means to press a victim against something which is psychologically irresistible. In the teller's instance, the irresistible psychic hard place might be called a drive for self-preservation. This is a case in which internal and external circumstances combine to form a third type of situation. As such it exemplifies Type C, "whose special characteristic is that the agent acts because of the irresistibility of a desire without attempting to prevent that desire from determining his action."²⁹

Having laid out Frankfurt's understanding of coercive situations in more detail, it is time to turn back to Thalberg's objection.

Most victims would, at the time and later, give second-order endorsement to their cautious motives. They are unlikely to yearn, from their elevated tribune, for more defiant ground-floor urges.

Upon further reflection, I wonder if we ought to have meekly accepted all this apparatus of first- and second-order conation. . . . Sticking with the holdup victim: what is likely to be the principled object of his aversion--that his money is gone or that it was 'for these reasons' that he abandoned his money? Surely he 'minds' his action, and particularly its financial

²⁸ Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 115.

²⁹ Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 115.

consequences, more than he 'minds' his own motivational state? . . . Why, *pace* Frankfurt, should the victim want to 'overcome' his operative desire? A dilemma emerges: Either he stratospherically dislikes merely having the desire, or he opposes it because it 'moves him effectively to act.' Presumably the latter. But is he distressed merely because the inclination is on hand while he acts--or because of what results from its presence, namely his deed and its consequences? Apparently our putative second-order volitional antics are more concerned with our behavior, and its effect, than with the first-order desires that engendered it. Dworkin and Frankfurt are mistaken, or anyway guilty of exaggeration, when they suppose that what a constrained person 'doesn't want' is for some desire or another to move him.³⁰

I do not wish to challenge Thalberg respecting those cases in which an agent is constrained by external circumstances or a combination of internal and external circumstances when the agent does not disapprove of the internal circumstances. Thalberg is right about the teller's mental state--she disapproves of the robbery, including her relinquishing the money, but she does not disapprove of her own prudence. What is important in such cases is not the coercive nature of the situations, but rather that the agent can be accurately described under the FD model as having a disposition regarding acts, not lower-order desires. In these cases the importation of a hierarchical scheme of desires would add unnecessary complexity to our explanation of the psychic states of the agents in question. In fact, it seems clear that in ordinary cases of compulsion, it is indeed the act itself that we do not like--that dislike is exactly why coercion is required in the first place. But Frankfurt acknowledges this. He remarks that someone in a case of Type C is in some ways like a wanton.

He is not defeated by the desire, as in situations of type B, since he does not oppose a second-order volition to it. Nor is he autonomous within the limits of an unsatisfactory set of alternatives, as in situations of type A,

³⁰ Thalberg, 126-27.

since his action does not result from an effective choice on his part concerning what to do.³¹

Indeed, Frankfurt suggests that it is the victim's similarity to a wanton that makes coercion as repugnant as it is,³² and we do not blame people for behaving as wantons under coercive circumstances. Even bystanders, not personally at risk during the robbery, would hardly suggest that the victim oppose her desire to continue living. No one, we might say, could blame her for giving the money to the criminal. Indeed, Frankfurt notes,

[A]ssuming that we do regard the [bank] clerk as acting freely, the reason we refrain from blaming him is not that we think he bears no moral responsibility for his submission to the raider. It is that we judge him to act reasonably when he gives up the bank's money instead of his own life, and so we find nothing blameworthy in what he does.³³

This passage reinforces the reply to Thalberg. Frankfurt does not paint the picture that Thalberg accuses him of painting in cases of coercion. The FD model does not call for a second-order disapproval, and the reason for this is that the teller acts *reasonably* by giving up the money. As above, coercion is ineffective if the coerced act is not the most reasonable option open to the victim. This point may be made more clear when we consider that coercion *depends* on the victim's being in a certain respect reasonable. It can be difficult to coerce the unreasonable.

Before moving on to a discussion of reasonableness in identification let us lay out the rest of Thalberg's objection--this time respecting unconstrained acts.

³¹ Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 115.

³² Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 115.

³³ Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 122.

We can bolster this objection if we look at the contrasting example which both Frankfurt and Dworkin offer. . . . Dworkin conjures up someone who "might want to hand over some money . . . because he is asked by a relative, or because he is feeling charitable, or because he desires to rid himself of worldly things." Now I would rephrase my criticism by asking: Does this person long only, or primarily for a desire--either (1) the impulse to help his kin, (2) the urge to help all unfortunates, or (3) the inclination to divest himself of lucre and property? A more plausible diagnosis would be that he is transferring his approval of certain acts to these desires (1), (2), or (3). If we underscore his wanting to be moved 'effectively to act' by (1), (2), or (3), then the dilemma I propounded above ought to show that what the uncoerced, would be moneygiver wants is to perform generous acts.³⁴

Once again we can grant that Thalberg understands the agent's dispositions correctly. We can concede that this individual desires to perform certain actions, and there is no need here to speak of higher-order dispositions at all. But this is not the case of most interest, for there is a difference between wanting to give and wanting to be a giver. It is an error to mistake the transitivity between dispositions and acts for an identity. We can easily imagine a person who wants to *be* more generous, even if external circumstances, such as having little or nothing to give, would preclude performing generous acts. Likewise, we can think of cases in which a person reasonably wants to oppose some disposition which renders her character somehow defective in her own eyes. For example, Jane may fear confrontation to the point that she would acquiesce in a situation in which such acquiescence is unreasonable. We must allow that Jane could be construed as being *unreasonably* vulnerable to coercion because of her excessive timidity. There may be cases in which Jane is squeezed against her timidity by external forces and she behaves in a way that others, with a more ordinary psychic ration of timidity,

³⁴ Thalberg, 127. The quote from Dworkin is from his "Acting Freely," *Nous*, Vol. 4 (1970): 371.

would not. Under such circumstances, Jane's actions would be most comfortably classified under Type B. Suppose, for example, Jane is the only witness to an act of shoplifting. Despite her knowledge of her civic duty, her fear of criminals in general overwhelms her and she fails to notify the storekeeper. Jane knows that her failure to act is attributable to her excessive fear of confrontation, and she rebukes herself.

Now, it is of course possible to think of Jane's self-rebuke as exclusively act-centered. That is, her dislike could be described simply as a dislike for the timid act she performed by omission. But this fails to capture fully the facts of the case, for Jane's dislike is better described as including a dislike for an aspect of Jane. She knows that her omission resulted from her inordinately timid disposition. It is not difficult for Jane to imagine the ordinary person notifying the storekeeper. It would be accurate to say that her action did not measure up to her standards, but it would be more complete to say that the psychic element of excess timidity was exhibited in that action. Saying that Jane dislikes her act alone suggests that she would experience similar dislikes regardless of her understanding of the causes behind the act. This is plainly false in our common experiences. Jane dislikes her act *and* the psychic factors behind it. She would feel much differently if she had kept mum because there was a pistol stuck in her ribs, for Jane's keeping quiet under such coercive circumstances would not be out of the ordinary.

There are sorts of coercive situations which are coercive in the face of ordinary characters, Type C, and those situations which are coercive only due to special features of particular persons and as such, these particular person's acts fall under Type B. This is only a rough division, and we can certainly think of difficult cases. But, as Dr. Johnson is supposed to have observed, that there is a twilight

does not prevent our distinguishing between night and day.³⁵ When the teller hands over the money in the classic case, we have an example of Type C. When Jane omits to notify the clerk of the shoplifting, we have a case of Type B. To understand this distinction more completely, let us turn again to Frankfurt's characterization of Type B acts:

In situations of Type B, it is the inner circumstances of his action that are discordant with the agent's desires. What motivates his action is a desire by which, given the alternatives he confronts, he does not want to be moved to act. There is a conflict within him, between a first-order desire to do what he actually does and a second-order volition that this first-order desire not be effective in determining his action. In other words, he wants to be motivated effectively, with respect to the alternatives he faces, by some desire other than the one that actually moves him to act as he does.³⁶

Appreciating this helps us to understand more thoroughly why Thalberg's analysis seems inadequate. Jane does indeed disapprove of the act, but she is aware that part of what made that situation coercive *for her* involved a defect in her character. In other words, Jane of course disapproves of her act, but she also disapproves of its causal story as she understands her excess timidity to be both necessary and sufficient for the act. Notice now that it is her understanding or believing that her act resulted from an excess of timidity that distinguishes Type C from Type B. It is not necessary that this self-evaluation be objectively true in order to ground a second-order disapproval of a first-order disposition. Were Jane to hold herself to unreasonable standards, imagining that John Wayne movies are

³⁵ Attributed to Johnson by Elizabeth Anscombe, "War and Murder," *War, Morality, and the Military Profession*, ed. Malham M. Wakin (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1986) 294.

³⁶ Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 114.

representative of reasonable behavior, it may well be that many more of her experiences would fit Type B. What one expects of oneself is an individual matter, as is evaluating how well one lives up to those expectations.

Let us look to some more of Thalberg's remarks and then apply the distinction:

I should explain that an 'unwilling' addict does not merely elect to be rid of his desire for narcotics. What does he care about the craving *per se*? He may dislike the bodily pains he undergoes when the craving comes over him, but I think that is a separable matter. My point is that he is mainly opposed to the actions he performs, and their long-term effects, when he succumbs to his craving.³⁷

Thalberg misses the point about what is bothersome in cases of addiction. Though some addicts may say that it is the act of taking the drug that they dislike, it seems likely that for many addicts it is the addiction itself that is the object of disapproval. It is the settled disposition to take drugs that constitutes the problem for an unwilling addict, for whom the act of taking drugs is a Type B act. If it were possible to take drugs only occasionally--that is, to take them or leave them--then taking drugs would be like any other philosophically uninteresting case. It is the *pattern* of actions or *disposition* to certain actions that concerns the unwilling addict. *Pace* Thalberg, what the addict dislikes is his addiction. The core of the evil of drug addiction seems to be that the act of taking drugs reacts with the individual taking them in such a fashion as to awaken an unbalancing psychic force. This may be even more clear in another case of Type B. If we imagine a recovering alcoholic, it seems that what makes him an alcoholic is some special fact about him, not about the acts he performs.

³⁷ Thalberg, 132.

Of course some overwhelming desires--self-preservation is one--are in the main welcome aspects of our psychic architecture. It is not the intensity of a desire that is of particular interest--rather, it is how well a disposition integrates with the rest of a person's psyche that seems to render it welcome or otherwise. The disposition to preserve the self is, for most people, consistent with the rest of their dispositions. But there can be other strong urges, such as an excessive timidity, that can be inconsistent with self-preservation. We can imagine cases in which excessive timidity would cause someone to suffer harm when a more ordinary psychic ration of courage would have preserved life.³⁸

These cases should clarify the value of the hierarchical scheme. It facilitates descriptions of likes and dislikes both of simple acts or states of affairs as well as the more complex cases that ordinary psychic experiences sometimes include. A psychic posture which regards some act, regardless of the motives of that act, admittedly does not benefit from being forced into a hierarchical scheme. It seems clear that there is *no need* to invoke a hierarchy when the object of a disposition or liking is not another disposition or liking. Any given act is a discrete event; there is no point in complicating it. Hence, if a bank-teller hands over money or if a drug addict takes a drug, if it is the *act* in question that their disposition regards, that is the whole of the story, and there is no point in complicating things by appeal to a hierarchical explanation.

³⁸ John Christman has noted that "[w]hat is problematic about compulsive desires is not merely that they are compulsive--uncontrollable at the moment of effectiveness--but rather that they often are in manifest conflict with the agent's other desires." John Christman, "Autonomy and Personal History," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 21 (1991): 16.

But that a model may be applied incorrectly does not entail that the model itself is ill-conceived. If we consider cases like Jane's, or the unwilling addict, or a recovering alcoholic, we are considering cases in which a disposition regards another more or less settled disposition. The *object* of the approval/disapproval is itself a disposition. The justification for the hierarchy lies in the psychic facts of the matter when we take a posture toward another psychic posture. The fact that the former posture is a posture *toward* another posture (and not toward some act) justifies adopting the hierarchical scheme. And, as it is cases of self-determination of our dispositions over the long haul that are specifically of interest, the hierarchical scheme is warranted.

The Mechanistic Model

Thalberg's objection is one species of a larger genus that bears thorough consideration. We need to ask whether a relatively economical mechanistic model involving opposing mental forces seeking balance on a single plane may be preferable overall to the more complex hierarchical model. I will argue that the complexity of the FD scheme is warranted given the great explanatory versatility that the hierarchical scheme offers.

If we think back to Jane's case, we might try to describe her psychic conflict in much the same way that we describe cases of physical motion. If, for example, we were to describe the motion of a leaf as it falls to the ground, we might be able to do so in terms of the forces acting upon it. Sometimes leaves fall to the ground more or less directly. In these cases, the force exerted by gravity is plainly the most relevant. But other times, there might be air currents which lift the leaf well above the tree from which it has become detached. Here, gravity is equally a factor, but it is not the most powerful factor relative to the leaf's path. In

still other cases, snow might adhere to the leaf, forcing it to fall from the tree. In each instance, we might acknowledge the presence of the force of gravity, but we would explain the leaf's fall in terms of the most effective, or we might say, the prevailing force (or, perhaps, combination of forces) acting on the leaf. Regardless of the individual features of each story, the important property of all of these explanations is their interaction on a level physical playing ground. The path of the leaf is nothing more than the result of the interplay of forces on the leaf. None of the forces under consideration regard another force--they all regard the leaf.

Moving to Jane, we might suggest that her behavior is describable in an analogous fashion. Suppose Jane genuinely wants to give public speeches, but her timidity opposes the fulfillment of this desire. We might want to say that Jane is "conflicted"--her wish to speak in public conflicts, that is, with her wish to keep to herself. Naturally, it seems likely that the picture is a bit more complicated. There may be fear of failure, desire for approval and popularity, etc. Any of these forces might prevail over the others at any given time. If Jane is able to give a speech, we might explain this behavior in terms of the force of her courageous impulses (and other allied affects--fervent devotion to a cause, perhaps, or fear of disappointing her friends) as overpowering the countervailing but weaker forces of timidity and its allies. The particulars of any given explanation of this sort are not of present interest. What is important is the *form* of the explanation--it makes no distinction in kind between the forces but rather calculates their resultant force and then offers an explanation in terms of the relative efficacy of the forces acting upon Jane.

Now, when we think of falling leaves, the simple, symmetrical though unequal interplay of forces on a single plane seems perfectly adequate to provide a common-sense explanation. But not all phenomena are as simple as a falling leaf.

When considering a situation in which one force can act upon another force, the resulting force would still come about from the addition of forces, but in a more refined way.

Think of a child sick with pneumonia. The child's immune system creates antibodies which have as their object the bacteria infecting the child. One *could* of course try to describe the course of the illness as the course of humours striving for domination over one another and thereby causing an imbalance in the child. But it is more powerful to describe the course of the illness as formally asymmetric (though formal asymmetry does not imply any deep imbalance of forces). The important feature of this description is that the child's antibodies *regard* the pneumococcus, but the bacteria do not regard the antibodies. The bacteria are primitive in a way that the antibodies are not. The antibodies rely upon the bacteria as logical precursors; it is the bacteria which explain the function of the antibodies, but there is no like dependence of the bacteria on the antibodies.

Recalling Jane's timidity, we note that the true form of her dispositions' interaction is more closely akin to the course of the child's illness than to the example of the falling leaf. Jane has opposing dispositions of courage and timidity at the lower order, but that is not all of the story. Her disposition to act timidly finds another opponent in her disapproval of the lower-order disposition *at* a higher order. It seems clear that her higher-order disposition against her lower-order disposition to behave timidly is more like an antibody than an opposing humour. The disposition in question regards the tendency to act timidly--it does not merely oppose it, as courage and desiring approval do. In other words, the disposition under consideration is indeed opposed to some other force, but there is another, more philosophically interesting relationship at play. In contrast to her

disposition to promote justice, which takes justice as its object, Jane's disposition to disapprove of her timidity has as its object another disposition. The disposition against timidity *contains* or *refers to*, as a necessary condition of its having a psychic purpose, *Jane's* timidity. It is opposed, but not, so to speak, diametrically.

It should be remarked that many times we tend to think only of higher-order dispositions in terms of disapproval of the lower-order dispositions which they regard. This is a natural tendency because, for many, what we think is wrong with us is of much more interest than what we think is right.³⁹ Still, the features which recommend the hierarchical approach apply equally well to cases in which we approve, at the second order, of a lower-order disposition. For example, Jane's second-order approval of her first-order disposition to be generous likewise is an approval of another disposition. More, though we could construe her approval of her generosity as simply an additional generous force on the same plane as the generosity, it seems clear that we give a better account of the state of psychic affairs by making use of the precision that the hierarchical scheme offers. Jane's approval of her generosity is not just *more* generosity at all. It is, instead, an approving evaluation of the generosity it regards.⁴⁰

³⁹ The FD model contains no account of identifying *against* some disposition. In order to account for Jane's disapproval of her timidity, Frankfurt would have her identify with a second-order disapproval of a first-order tendency to behave timidly. Though I believe that the hierarchical model is justified, I do not think it necessary to invoke more than one order in all cases. I will argue in the next chapter, that the FD model can be made more economical by incorporating identification *against* some disposition.

⁴⁰ It is worthwhile mentioning as a tangential technical point that the hierarchical scheme permits an ascent through any number of orders. Though it may be the unusual person who is disposed at the third-order to approve of her second-order disapproval of her first-order disposition to behave timidly,

To clarify this further, imagine that Jane suddenly had no higher-order dispositions at all. Her lack of higher-order dispositions would not affect her timidity and generosity. That is, according to the simple mechanistic model, no force would be added or subtracted from her first-order dispositions. But it seems clear that something important has changed in Jane, and the mechanistic model would have no way of reflecting that change. Jane does not just experience the conflicting forces of timidity and anti-timidity; she disapproves of her timidity. The higher-order dispositions seem to encompass a conception of the lower-order dispositions. This is a feature of human existence which the hierarchical scheme accounts for elegantly. The very notion of a hierarchy suggests that the higher levels take account of the lower orders in a way that the lower-order dispositions do not mirror. Jane feels this asymmetry in her *disapproval* of her lower-order dispositions. The lower-order dispositions may have a purchase on Jane, but the higher-order dispositions have a purchase of a subtly different kind. The lower-order dispositions regard something outside the self--the higher regard something inside us, albeit detached in some way. This is a part of why we experience the dispositions differently. Frankfurt's hierarchical scheme, though involving a certain complexity, does have the redeeming, and to my mind decisive, virtue of accounting for this phenomenon.

Frankfurt's scheme does allow for the accurate description of such a person's mental gymnastics. A simple mechanistic model, by contrast, would have to reduce the third-order approval to something like a stronger opposing force to the first-order timidity. Such a reduction does simplify the explanation, but at the cost of accuracy of representation.

This is not to say that Frankfurt's scheme could not be improved. It is to say, however, that the hierarchical scheme is itself a marked improvement over a less sophisticated mechanistic approach.

Procedural Independence

The discussion of Frankfurt's scheme leaves us with the suggestion that identification is somehow both more free⁴¹ and more representative of the self than at least some dispositions. Those familiar with Frankfurt will recall that his scheme was developed at least in part as a defense of the compatibility of human free will and metaphysical determinism. I am not interested in that issue here. But I do take it as one of the more salient strengths of the FD model that it at least tries to handle distinctions between those aspects of ourselves which we feel are in some sense alien to the self (no matter how well entrenched they seem to be) from those which we feel to be our own. In other words, it captures the difference between the unwilling addict's addiction, which he takes as alien to himself, and his unwillingness to be addicted, which he thinks is more truly his. In our example, Jane might say that even though she possesses it, her timidity still is not hers in the way that her identification against it is truly hers. This is at least in part because she believes she has a kind of authority over her identifications that she does enjoy over her dispositions. While her timidity seems to her a given, she feels as though she can still exercise some authority over how she relates to it. To Jane, anyway, the latter seems more closely a part of her than the former.

⁴¹ See especially Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 119-21 where it is argued that an individual may be morally responsible for her actions if she identifies with the desire to commit them even though she is "programmed" to perform them.

Distinctions of this sort are common enough to our lives and seem to be critical to making sense of identification and its role in self-determination. Yet providing an analysis of the distinction is a difficult philosophical project. Gerald Dworkin has approached the problem using the formal notion of procedural independence. For a choice to be one's own, it must be made under conditions of procedural independence.

A brief detour into nomenclature is appropriate before proceeding. Dworkin does not rely on all the complexities of Frankfurt's model. In particular, he conflates identification into orders of desire. Hence, for Dworkin, identification is "highest-order approval." What distinguishes "highest-order approval" from other sorts of judgments seems to be that the psychic buck stops at that highest-order, and that the highest order is free of undue influences in a way that the lower-order dispositions may not be. Though this may seem to simplify things, it is best to divorce the notion of identification from Dworkin's label of "highest-order approval" because it would be easy to think of the latter as an order of *disposition* as opposed to being of a different psychic kind from dispositions. I will argue at length for the distinction between higher-order dispositions and identifications in the next two chapters, but for the purposes of keeping things as clear as possible in this chapter let us simply stipulate the distinction.

For Dworkin, external influences on particular choices are not incompatible with their being under an agent's authority as long as the choices themselves are procedurally independent.⁴² To understand procedural independence we must first

⁴² Gerald Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 14-18.

appreciate that Dworkin makes a distinction between procedural and substantive independence. Consider that a trade itself can be made freely even though the items traded may be restrictions on freedom. Put another way, even if it is true that all we can do is trade one sort of unfreedom for another, that fact does not render our trades themselves unfree. Suppose that Jane believes that her timidity renders her unfree in that it pulls her toward timid behavior when she would really prefer to defend justice. She may attempt to manipulate herself by taking leave from law school and enlisting in the Marines for a two-year commitment, trusting that the rigorous training and martial living environment will work to weaken her timidity and build up her aggressiveness. But she also knows that when she commits to the Marines she is making a serious commitment to becoming a changed woman. If her self-manipulation is successful, the old timid Jane will be a thing of the past, difficult if not impossible to reclaim. In short, her life would be unfree in ways in which it is free now. After becoming a Marine she will not be free to behave timidly, but, assuming she succeeds in her training, she will become free of her excessively timid disposition. This in turn may free her to defend justice more aggressively when she returns to her legal training. Jane's choice to join the Marines is a procedurally free choice to exchange one sort of substantive limitation for another.

Though Jane's example may be in some ways extreme, it provides a nice illustration of an important fact about our lives. Even if there is no such thing as an irrevocable commitment to some trait of character, we cannot coherently make simultaneously divergent choices. In fact, attempting to identify with divergent

dispositions might be one way to define psychic incoherence.⁴³ If we bear this in mind we can understand why substantive independence is not merely unnecessary for self-determination but why to require it would be to undermine self-determination. If one is to determine oneself, one *must* do so in some substantial way. To make a choice is to close off other options. As Hobbes famously pointed out, "it is called *deliberation* because it is a putting an end to the *liberty* we had of doing or omitting according to our own appetite or aversion."⁴⁴ But, while making choices necessarily limits our options, that does not mean that the choices we make are not procedurally independent.

For Dworkin, procedurally independent self-determination requires that "the choice of the kind of person one wants to become [must not] be influenced by other persons or circumstances in such a fashion that we do not view those evaluations as being the person's own."⁴⁵ This is, as I have suggested, not a simple distinction to analyze. Dworkin himself puts the nature of the problem well:

There are a number of conceptual issues [in my work] that must be worked out in greater detail. Perhaps the most crucial is gaining a better understanding of the difference between what I call "procedurally independent" second-order evaluations and those that are not. Roughly, the distinction is between those modes of evaluation that interfere with the rationality of higher-order reflection and those that do not. We believe,

⁴³ The divergence I have in mind involves the logical incompatibility of two dispositions, such as cowardice and moral courage. It is not meant to include dispositions which are only contingently incompatible in one person's life, such as the disposition to be a responsible parent and the disposition to come and go as one pleases.

⁴⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberal Arts Press, 1958) 59.

⁴⁵ Dworkin, *Theory* 18; 21-23.

prior to philosophical reflection, that there is a difference between a person who is influenced by hypnotic suggestion or various modes of deception and those who are influenced by true information and modes of rational inquiry. In the former case, but not the latter, we think of someone else as responsible for his reasoning and his conclusions. This is not a metaphysical distinction but a practical one and it is important to make explicit what criteria we use to make such a distinction.⁴⁶

Dworkin does not supply the analysis he calls for, and as we shall see, making the criteria for procedural independence explicit is difficult. Dworkin does say that "[s]pelling out the conditions of procedural independence involves distinguishing those ways of influencing people's reflective and critical faculties which subvert them from those which promote and improve them."⁴⁷ I will consider the obvious circularity of this assertion below. For now, I understand Dworkin to mean that while certain sorts of causal stories can be told which would cast doubt over an identification's being under an agent's authority, many other sorts of causal explanations do not cast such doubt. For example, if Jane were to identify with her generous nature, but we were able to show that she had, as a child, suffered electric shocks every time she displayed any possessiveness, we might want to say that her identification with her generous nature was subverted--that is, it was not procedurally independent. Yet if we were to explain her identification in terms of her having received a reasonably complete education and a wholesome upbringing, both of which included ordinary components of empathy and respect for others, etc., then we might say that her identification was indeed hers in spite of the fact that it could be attributed to her environment. This seems to be the sort of distinction Dworkin has in mind, and it certainly seems

⁴⁶ Dworkin, *Theory* 161.

⁴⁷ Dworkin, *Theory* 18.

appropriate to make it for a host of practical ethical reasons. Providing a thorough analysis of procedural independence, however, is by no means straightforward.

The notion as it stands begs the question. Procedural independence is used as a way of distinguishing "free" identification from "alien" identification. Yet it relies on the assumption that we know the difference between causal explanations that render identifications heteronomous and those which are compatible with autonomy. Attempts to break out of this circularity seem to start us on an infinite regress.

John Christman has mounted the most sustained attack on the problem I have come across in the literature. Christman suggests that one test for a violation of procedural independence might be this:

[A]ny factor affecting some agent's acts of reflection and identification is "illegitimate" if the agent would be moved to revise the desire so affected, were she to be aware of that factor's presence and influence. That is to say, if an agent comes to know that a certain factor (hypnosis, for example) played a crucial role in the formation of, and identification with, a certain preference, and she revises her approval of that preference as a result, then that factor is considered illegitimate.⁴⁸

That is, if we were to be made aware of the causal story behind some identification and still maintain the identification, then the identification would be "ours" in a way that it would not be were we to object to the causal story behind it. But, of course, our evaluation of that causal story itself must be free from undue influences as well. Christman considers this problem in a later article:

Such things as hypnosis, some drugs, certain educational techniques, and the like, have the effect of rendering the agent less able to evaluate, from

⁴⁸ John Christman, "Autonomy: A Defense of the Split-Level Self," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 25 (1987): 290-91.

her own point of view, the processes by which she has come to develop a certain desire or value. Her vision is clouded, as it were. . . . These factors will be those which vitiate the normal cognitive processes of an agent that involve reflection and evaluation of the agent's own states.⁴⁹

But this suggestion does not solve the problem. All it does is move it a bit, for we need to know what counts as vitiating, and the range of plausible suggestions for this is broad. Christman suggests that our capacity for self-awareness "is impaired when the desire(s) that are in fact motivating the agent to act cannot be brought clearly into conscious focus, perhaps because of induced self-denial or merely an inability to concentrate."⁵⁰ He goes on to name some causal suspects. "An example might be the relentless harangue of a cult leader who invokes such fear and anxiety in his listeners that they are unable to step back and reflect on the changes they themselves are going through."⁵¹ Christman also proposes "indicators . . . of the general failure of self-awareness and rationality that autonomy demands."⁵² These include

failure on the part of the agent to bring (otherwise) salient aspects of a representation or a motivating desire to consciousness; failures of concentration that inhibit the ability to recognize (otherwise) salient relations between aspects of objects or their mental representations; failures in the judgment of (normal) causal and inferential connections between objects or propositions.⁵³

⁴⁹ Christman, "Autonomy and Personal History" 19.

⁵⁰ Christman, "Autonomy and Personal History" 19.

⁵¹ Christman, "Autonomy and Personal History" 19.

⁵² Christman, "Autonomy and Personal History" 20.

⁵³ Christman, "Autonomy and Personal History" 20.

In other words, it looks as though strong persuasion might be enough to violate procedural independence by somehow precluding critical reflection on the persuasion itself. Indeed, for that matter, an agent's inability to think well, or even lacking the discipline required to think well, may be enough. For Christman, then, procedural independence includes both an historical requirement that the causal stories behind our identifications are such that we would not object to them if we were to know them, and also that our present-day capacity to object is unvitiated.

It seems a logical extension of Christman's position that if violations can occur because of a persuasive harangue or undisciplined thinking, then procedural independence is violated routinely, and the class of identifications which are not truly ours is a large one. But not everyone shares this broad conception of what might get between ourselves and elements of our psyches. Claudia Mills has argued that the conditions required for vitiation are both more extreme and much less common than Christman seems to think. Mills describes the case of undergraduate Elizabeth who is considering "whether to go to law school right after college or to take a year off."

Elizabeth asks her parents what they think, and they put enormous pressure on her to go to school without delay, rather than "waste" a year "goofing off doing nothing." Because they have offered to pay for law school, Elizabeth is afraid to offend them, or to appear ungrateful for the significant contribution they will be making, at some sacrifice, for her future. . . . Elizabeth decides to go directly to law school. . . . Suppose the decision, however, doesn't reflect Elizabeth's best judgment of the situation, but reflects only her unthinking acceptance of her parents' point of view. Even so, I find myself wanting to say: but that is the kind of person Elizabeth IS.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Claudia Mills, "When Is a Belief, Desire, or Action Truly 'My Own,'" unpublished ms., 1993, 7-8.

While Christman's broad conception of the sorts of influences that violate procedural independence would include the parental pressure described in this case as a violation, Mills has a contrasting intuition. Indeed, for Mills's narrow conception, the conditions required to violate a person's procedural independence must involve some sort of biological explanation originating outside the agent. Her conditions include only the unusual instances of being drugged involuntarily or undergoing brain surgery to which one has not consented.⁵⁵

[D]espite our strong pull to regard certain beliefs, desires, and actions as more truly our own, and others as less truly our own, the only beliefs, desires, and actions from which we can distance ourselves in this way are not ones marked by any special distinctive features, not ones formed only under the rightful or wrongful influence of others, but only, in some cases, those that have been forced on us by direct physical intervention.⁵⁶

Mills and Christman have widely varying understandings of what it takes to vitiate someone's procedural independence, and from the point of view of the ontology of procedural independence they both seem about equally plausible. There is no compelling analytical reason to recommend one over the other. To settle on one of these views, or perhaps on some position between the two, we first need a philosophically adequate analysis of procedural independence, and that is just the analysis we are trying to come to. We need, in other words, a conception of procedural independence that is not vulnerable to accusations of circularity or of starting us on an infinite regress. And, unfortunately, our chances of securing such an analysis seem dim. We could never *know* that the identifying self enjoys psychological procedural independence because we can never prove that our

⁵⁵ Mills, 9-11.

⁵⁶ Mills, 13.

understanding of the forces that could be vitiating is itself unvitiating. We cannot know that we're free of influences which we would resist if we were aware of them. Any claim to such knowledge would be met with a concern that the claim itself could have been insidiously unduly influenced. I am unable to conceive of any line of analysis which would not be plagued in this way by a regress problem. At best, it seems that certain cases can be named in which procedural independence seems to be violated, others posited in which procedural independence seems intact, and a general characterization of the difference thereby indicated. But such a general characterization would have to be general indeed if it were to include views that vary as widely as Mills's and Christman's.

That we cannot provide an analysis does not render the distinction useless or unimportant. As a practical matter we can appreciate the distinction between those aspects of ourselves which seem alien and those which do not, even if we cannot always agree on where the dividing line should be drawn or provide a philosophically defensible analysis of it. And though there might be good practical or ethical reasons to enumerate a set of criteria, such reasons would hardly count as an analysis. Instead of providing a strained analysis, or an analysis that relies on justifications external to our area of inquiry in philosophical anthropology, it seems appropriate to ask first whether there might be a different way of posing the distinction that is both adequate for a theory of psychic identification and perhaps a bit less fraught with metaphysical conundrums. To begin on this project, we can turn to another sort of criticism of the FD scheme in general.

Whether the Higher Orders Are in Fact Privileged

In operation the identifying self seems ultimately evaluative--it is where the psychic buck is stopped. It is by identification that we settle on the dispositions we

do, thereby putting an end to debate. But, as we have noted, this suggests that when one identifies, one must be doing so from a realm of the self which has some sort of special status that other aspects of the self lack. While Jane to wants to disown her timidity as being "not Jane's own" we need an account of what it is to be "Jane's own." Part of the answer might be supplied by our very rough practical characterization of procedural independence. We can, for example, say that those dispositions which appear in Jane only after she has been given psychoactive drugs against her will are not "Jane's own." But this is not enough to let us define what it is to be "Jane's own."

Let us examine a different avenue of approach suggested by Marilyn Friedman. Suppose we determine that Jane, having been reared in a sexist society in which girls and women are rewarded for timid behavior, naturally reacted to her upbringing by behaving timidly. Timid acting brought rewards while more aggressive behavior that would have been considered ordinary in a male child met disapprobation. Jane's timid behavior became inculcated as a disposition during her formative years, when she was in no mental position to evaluate the behavior or the disposition from an adult's vantage point. Now that she can understand the negative effects of her excess timidity and the causal story of its inculcation, however, Jane wishes to be rid of it.

With Jane's case in mind we can appreciate how Friedman characterizes the problem:

When a person's goals, values, standards, and ideals are explained plausibly in these [behavioristic] ways, it is tempting to conclude that they are not really her "own," that they have been determined by conditions other than her own self, and that she, accordingly, has not really thought (or chosen) for herself—even when her choices were made in the absence of immediate coercion and constraint. . . . If critical reflection is to have . . . autonomy-

conferring status, if it is to enable a person to choose *for herself* when she endorses her first level motivations, then it must already possess a special status in relation to the self. Split-level self theorists [e.g. Frankfurt and Dworkin] tell us, in varying ways, that critical reflection is more 'truly of the self' than unassessed motivation. But what exactly does this mean?⁵⁷

As we have seen, the task of explaining just why it is that the "identifying self" is privileged is indeed difficult. Friedman proposes, therefore, that instead of trying to provide a justification for the claim that it is privileged we should question the claim to privileged status itself. Friedman suggests that we conceive of our relationships to dispositions from the standpoint of our dispositions. That is, she suggests a more democratic approach by which we might at least sometimes assess our higher principles from, as she puts it, "the 'bottom-up.'"⁵⁸

Legions of philosophers have given ontological preference, in their conceptions of human being, to what is variously called reason, rationality, conscience, the principled self, the reflective self, or the critically assessing self. It is this aspect of the self which is considered to be the "real" self, the "core" self, the "true" self, or the self with which we "identify," the self in accord with which all the rest is to be assessed, the self which rightfully rules the whole person. Split-level self accounts of autonomy do not depart from this predominant philosophical tradition. My proposal to regard motivations at the "lowest" level as providing *a* standpoint for assessing higher-level principles is indeed aimed at altering the traditional account with what promises to be a richer conception of the person. . . . My own proposal is that autonomy is achieved in virtue of a two-way process of integration within a person's hierarchy of motivations, intermediate standards and values, and highest principles.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Marilyn Friedman, "Autonomy and the Split-Level Self," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 24 (1986): 21, 23.

⁵⁸ Friedman, 31.

⁵⁹ Friedman, 31-32.

Friedman's suggestion warrants serious consideration. That one part of the psyche may regard another does not entail that any ontological privilege should be accorded to the former. She suggests that

[o]nly if a person's highest principles have been subjected to assessment in accord with her intermediate standards and her motivations, would it be appropriate to consider them her "own" principles. Thus her highest principles are "highest" only in a logical, not an ontological sense.⁶⁰

This tack seems generally promising, though we may not want to draw from it all of the conclusions that Friedman does. Friedman is right in suggesting that lower-order dispositions can provide a perspective from which to evaluate other aspects of the self, and we can even imagine cases in which it would be in the best interest of our characters to do so. I will describe just such a case in the next chapter. But Friedman misses something important in cases like Jane's or the unwilling addict's. Though it would certainly be possible for Jane to reject her concern for justice in accord with her timidity, and our unwilling addict could achieve a kind of internal harmony by evaluating his disapproval of his craving from the standpoint of that craving, it seems that these sorts of psychic shifts let the tail wag the dog. The demands of justice cannot be answered by appeal to timidity, nor can the value of mental health be made subject to certain cravings. Though it would, of course, be *possible* to follow Friedman's recommendations here, we would do so at great cost to our own virtue.

But her approach is insightful. From it we can draw the distinction we need to understand the difference between what is "Jane's own" and what is not. This distinction might be best understood as lying in the formal process of standing in

⁶⁰ Friedman, 32.

one place of the psyche and regarding another. The distinction is not to be understood as requiring us to climb the rungs of a psychic ladder until we reach the highest possible point, but rather as a distinction between taking a view as opposed to being a part of a view. In other words, we might think of the distinction as being between a subjective perspective on the self and the objects of that subjective perspective. The subjective perspective can be taken from anywhere on the psychic map. This is just why we could evaluate out higher-order principles from the "lowest" level. But it is not where the view is taken from as much as the fact that it is subjective that constitutes the distinction we need. One way to see how this is so is to explore more closely what goes on in the process of self-evaluation. It seems that when we engage in this sort of mental activity, we are exercising a sort of bracketing of some aspect of the self by another aspect. We can refer to this bracketing off of an aspect of the self as "objectification." I want to restrict the term to a precise meaning. By it I want to designate treating aspects of ourselves as objects of inquiry and at least potential manipulation. Think of objectifying an aspect of the self as an attempt to put some psychic distance between that aspect and the self that is interested in it. When we objectify a part of the self we wish to evaluate, understand, and perhaps manipulate the objectified aspect much the same way that we may wish to do so with some physical object.⁶¹ If this is on the right track, then we have a way of making sense of the identifying self's logical privilege without having to involve ourselves in ontological entanglements.

⁶¹ Cf. Peter Strawson's "objective attitude" that we might take to explaining the behavior (in particular, that which might be susceptible to treatment) of others. "Freedom and Resentment," *Free Will*, ed. Gary Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) 66.

The Nature of Identification's Privilege

Laying out a few more facts about the special nature of the "identifying self" might help prepare the ground for a characterization of its privileged nature. The phenomenon of self-manipulation that Jane displays by joining the Marines constitutes evidence that our relationship to our dispositions is asymmetric in an important way. Dispositions seem subject to manipulation by an identifying self, yet the identifying self offers resistance, quite often, to the appeals of the dispositions. Even if we grant that there may be dispositions over which individuals have no control, it still seems that, as in Frankfurt's unwilling addict case, the identifying self stands firm in some sense against the disposition. "You might make me act in such and such a way, but you can't make me like it," we seem to say. More importantly, we might want to say that the identifying self sometimes "outsmarts" dispositions, perhaps even enlisting some dispositions to oppose an unwelcome one. Jane might, for example, announce her intention to join the Marines so that she is compelled by a fear of shame into actually enlisting, no matter how strongly her timidity seems to tug her away from the recruiting office. Dispositions may stand in the way of reason's demands, but they cannot outmaneuver it.

What, then, is this identifying self that is "Jane's own"? It would be helpful to come to a practical understanding of this faculty of identification in order to facilitate developing a theory of identification itself. While there is no need for a full-fledged theory of the self, we do need enough to understand the subject of identification.

To begin it seems appropriate to ask what functions this self is required to perform. First, it provides a context for understanding our dispositions and other

potentially "alien" forces which seem to be our companions rather than our selves. Likewise, the identifying self provides a context for understanding our changing dispositions; it is the self over which the changes occur. The identifying self also seems to be the self that is satisfied or dissatisfied with the dispositions. It has an evaluative, judgmental aspect.

Yet there is more to the identifying self than merely a privileged view. The identifying self also contains a substantive aspect. The idea of the identifying self must help us make sense of the self that is "put behind" or which squares itself against certain dispositions. We struggle with our dispositions in a way that we do not struggle over purely cognitive matters. We might worry intellectually over the relative merits of ethical theories, but we struggle with aspects of ourselves in a way that seems more than purely cognitive.

Friedman is right in suggesting that one's highest principles are highest only in a logical sense. The ontological conundrums encountered when we try to make a stronger claim are daunting indeed. This leads me to propose that the "identifying self" might best be conceived as being special in two ways. The first involves an epistemological privilege; the second involves psychological authoritativeness.

We might begin by considering the identifying self as the "most informed self," or the "self having the best view." This is because the identifying self can appreciate the self from the greatest variety of views. Instead of conceiving of a hierarchy or split-level view of the self, an image of a referee in a soccer game may be more apt. The referee might stand among the members of one team or another, but she can understand the contest in a way that neither team alone can. The referee can follow the action wherever it occurs and can form an overall picture of it as it develops that includes all the players. Still, the referee can do her job

without our having to say that there is anything *ontologically* privileged about a referee over a soccer player. It is enough to say that she is epistemologically privileged. The view of the players, the teams, and the match is better from the referee's mobile perspective than it is from anywhere else on the field. And the referee in the psychic field of play is the person who identifies--that is, her subjectivity is found at the level of the referee in the game who can view all the players as objects, as well as the match as a whole.

Taking this view of the identifying self lets us say a few things about identification's relationship to reason, a topic which I shall consider in more depth in Chapter III. At least one important aspect of this relationship has to do with the ability of the identifying self to appreciate the counsels of reason in a way that dispositions cannot. For example, reason can at least have a run at explaining our dispositions in terms of how they affect our lives and perhaps in terms of how they came to be. Reason functions in the identifying self much as it does in the referee--it helps us discern the rules and how they apply. More, reason may be able to provide suggestions to us as to the proper attitude to take toward various dispositions and can even be used to chart a path to manipulate the dispositional array we have into one which is more to our liking. Dispositions are not cognitive elements of the psyche, and as such are deaf to the counsels of reason. The identifying self, by contrast, has a cognitive aspect, and as such enjoys a psychic privilege that dispositions do not even if there is no ontological distinction between the two. It is not so much reflection itself that is privileged in the relevant way, but rather the capacity to appreciate its results and to put them to use in determining the self.

The identifying self functions analogously as a psychic referee. It is distinguished from other aspects of the self because of its perspective and ability to make authoritative calls rather than by its being at the psychically highest place.

We can express the idea another way by thinking of a *hierarchy of context*. The context of a first-order disposition is second-order dispositions. One can "see" one's first-order dispositions from the second-order, and as such the second-order is capable of evaluating the first-order disposition, but the reverse is not true. The identifying self might profitably be thought of as lying orthogonally to the dispositions--and as such is the most general psychic faculty of context, regardless of whether it has properties inculcated by external forces. That is, it can be thought of as living in another psychic dimension, from which it can regard dispositions of any order.

Second, the identifying self is privileged in that it gets to make the psychic calls among dispositions. Jane considers her choices about herself to be a causal spring, at least at the level of psychic phenomena. That is, it is just the performance of an identification--of declaring a psychic winner, so to speak--that makes the identifying self privileged in a practical sense. Even if this identifying self were shown to be metaphysically determined, it would still have the psychic feeling of authority that is lacking in our dispositions. We have authority over our identifications in at least the limited sense that identifying has a phenomenological feel of being under our control in a way which is often absent in cases of our dispositions. As is the case with all referees, debate over the ontology of the psychic call is pointless, but likewise, the referee's authority is limited to making calls in a game. It does not choose the players or make up the rules. At the phenomenological level all we need for the identifying self to be psychically

privileged is that it has the power to make the calls. The metaphysics of the matter are at this practical level irrelevant, for it is identification itself that brings about psychic independence. Far from procedural independence being a condition of identification, then, things are just the other way round. Psychic identifications are declarations of independence; whether they are metaphysically compelling is unimportant, for they are effective at the psychic level. As Peter Strawson has argued, even if we were convinced of the truth of metaphysical determinism we would continue to live, and judge others, as though at least some of their actions were under their control.⁶²

The identifying self is psychically privileged, then, in that it is the final court of psychic appeal both for our understanding of ourselves and for our understanding of how we want to be. This of course does nothing ontologically to make it more "truly" the self than the dispositions it regards. The most accurate description of the self as a whole includes the matrix of dispositions and identifications that regard them. The best way to describe the unwilling addict is to say that he is really an addict who really does not want to be an addict. We might say, then, that identification reveals not so much what we in some metaphysical sense truly *are* but rather what we really want to be.

It is important to be clear that this pragmatic characterization may suffice as a way of putting a practical stop to theoretical regresses, but it is not enough to guarantee that our identifications are to function as a means of determining our characters for the better. Ideally, the referee's calls are accurate, and the most

⁶² Strawson, 68.

deserving dispositions are the one's with which we identify. But, as will become clear soon, we are capable of making bad psychic calls.

It may be that Dworkin's most important contribution is to provide a starting place for thinking about how we understand the characters we have and the characters we wish to have. The notion of procedural independence lets us see that some capability to stand back from aspects of ourselves seems necessary to identification. At the level of the psyche, identification just is this standing back and making a call. But this does not offer any guarantee that the identifications will be either metaphysically free or practically wise. Indeed, there is nothing about identification that requires rationality. Still, as I will presently argue, if identification is to be a way of determining ourselves wisely, it is best to attend to the counsels of reason.

Summary

This chapter has aimed at describing the background against which a theory of psychic identification might be developed and clearing away concerns about that background. I have argued that the hierarchical approach to describing our dispositions is justified despite its complexity because of the accuracy it affords. More simple mechanistic models fail to account for the special nature of regard which higher-order dispositions seem to exhibit.

I have also argued that, despite the considerable effort at an analysis in the literature, the notion of procedural independence should be abandoned as a contribution to understanding psychic identification. This is not to suggest that the notion is useless for other work in ethics, but it is to suggest that it contributes little to understanding identification. I have suggested that the nature of the identifying self's privilege should be understood in terms of epistemology and

phenomenology as opposed to ontology. It is in a favored position epistemologically because it enjoys the most broad psychic context. The identifying self may not be ontologically independent, but because it can declare independence at the level of the psyche it is sufficiently privileged to be distinguished from dispositions. This understanding is admittedly modest, but it is adequate to the task of helping us to understand the phenomenon of identification at the level of philosophical psychology.

CHAPTER III

IDENTIFICATION IN THE PSYCHIC STRUCTURE

If we are to improve our understanding of identification as a psychic kind *sui generis* it will be necessary first to clarify as far as possible just how identification is phenomenologically distinct from higher-order dispositions with which it might easily be confused. Likewise, because identification enjoys a particular relationship to reason, it is important to map out some of the more salient aspects of that relationship. Consequently, this chapter is devoted to three interrelated expository projects which together should help make clear the boundaries of identification. These projects will include a few proposals for the enhancement and simplification of the FD model. This in turn will provide a solid footing for the discussion of identification which will follow in Chapter IV.

The first project will be to examine certain dimensions along which identification may vary. Though it would be impossible to provide a complete taxonomy, we must appreciate at least some of the variations in how identification can be manifested if we are to defend identification as a distinct psychic kind. Accordingly, I will describe some of the major variations in identification and how we describe our relationships to our dispositions. My discussion is aimed not so much at cataloging the entire array of variations, but instead it is meant to prepare the way for an analysis of identification. It will be important to keep in mind that the same identification may vary along more than one dimension.

The second major project is focused on dispositions. I want to characterize dispositions well enough to show how they function as the objects of identification, as well as to help distinguish them from identification. Before we can understand Jane's relationship we must understand what she is relating *to*. I

will therefore attempt a rough psychological characterization of dispositions as a class. Then I will address the difficulties plaguing the accurate and unambiguous description of dispositions, and I will discuss how we describe the relationship between identification and dispositions it may regard.

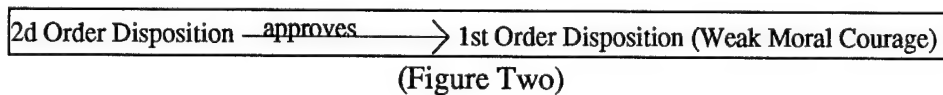
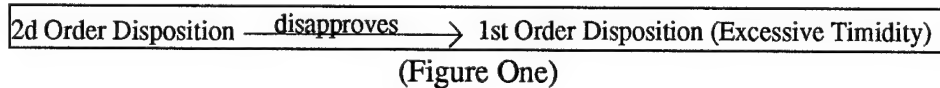
The third expository project is to gain an understanding of reason's relationship to identification. If identification is to be distinct from other psychic phenomena with which it might easily be confused (higher-order dispositions in particular), it would seem that at least one obvious distinction would be that identification is rational. Though I will argue that reason can be important to the development of good moral character, I will deny that it is key to distinguishing identification from other psychic acts. More, I will argue that we can identify mistakenly.

Varieties of Identification

The Objects and Strengths of Dispositions and Identification

Identification, as we have noted, is characterized far too thinly in the FD model. But before we can arrive at a more satisfying conception, we must first appreciate some of the different guises in which we may identify, as well as some of the complexities attendant to describing dispositions. Though we must keep in mind that there are many ways of conceiving of individual objects of both dispositions and identification, I will concentrate here on improving our conception of identification's relationship to various dispositions. In particular I will argue that the FD model should permit identification at any level of disposition, and that it is possible to identify against, as well as with, any disposition. Showing this will both simplify and strengthen the FD model.

Let us begin by thinking of Jane's dispositions again in order to see how best to describe them. Perhaps it is most accurate to suggest that Jane has a weak first-order disposition to be morally courageous, but a relatively much stronger one to be timid. Jane assuredly wants (at the second-order) to be less timidly disposed, but characterizing her second-order disposition more accurately in terms of both its object and its strength can be difficult. On the one hand we could explain her second-order disposition in terms of her wanting to weaken her disposition to be timid, as Figure One indicates. On the other hand we might think that she wants to nurture her weak disposition to be morally courageous, as in Figure Two. And, while at first blush it may seem that to say she wishes to become less timid is the same as saying that she wishes to become more courageous, I am not sure that this is so.



Some dispositions, as Aristotle noted, admit of opposites (e.g., cowardice and courage), and we might be able to take advantage of this feature of dispositions to simplify our explanations of persons' psyches. We might be able to eliminate the need for second-order disapproval of first-order dispositions by saying that a person identifies at the second order with the unwanted first-order disposition's opposite. We could describe our case by saying that one identifies

with a disposition to be courageous instead of with a second-order disposition that disapproves of first-order cowardice.

There are two reasons, however, why we might resist this sort of economizing as a general principle. First, as Aristotle observed, while many traits of character admit of opposites, not all of them do. To take two of his examples, it is difficult to think of the opposite of envy or spite.⁶³ Hence, though we may be able to eliminate some instances of higher-order desires simply by saying that someone identifies with the opposite of an undesired disposition (as with first-order courage instead of a second-order disposition against a first-order disposition to be timid), it is not at all clear that such economizing would be appropriate across all dispositions. Second, it may not always be appropriate even for those dispositions which do admit of opposites. It would not surprise us to find that Jane herself, though certainly unhappy with her excessive timidity, may not be certain just what disposition it is that she wants. Perhaps all she is sure of is that she wishes to be rid of her excess timidity. It may be that sometimes we simply wish to be *free* of certain dispositions without substituting some complementary disposition.

But there may be another opportunity for both simplifying and strengthening the FD model. If it turns out that what I have characterized as the second-order disposition to be free of some first-order disposition is in some cases better described as identifying *against* that same first-order disposition, then there are at least some cases in which one not only identifies at the first order, but does

⁶³ Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, (New York: Random House, 1941) 959 (1107a9-14).

so negatively. To investigate this, I shall now turn to the related questions of negative identification and first-order identification.

Negative and First-Order Identification

The FD model contains no explicit discussion of identifying directly *against* a disposition at any order, and it is unclear regarding the possibility of identifying directly at the first-order. Even in the face of the concerns enumerated above, I believe that identification of both types is possible, and, moreover, that including these in the FD model will not only make it more accurate, but will also simplify our descriptions of at least some cases of identification.

First, a bit of history. When Frankfurt published his structural representation of our relationships to our dispositions in 1971, it seemed clear that a second-order volition was the result of identifying with a first-order desire. "Someone has a desire of the second-order either when he wants simply to have a certain desire or when he wants a certain desire to be his will. In situations of the latter kind, I shall call his second-order desires 'second-order volitions.'"⁶⁴ The original article is unambiguous: "The unwilling addict identifies himself, however, through the formation of a second-order volition, with one rather than with the other of his conflicting first-order desires."⁶⁵

Yet in a later article, "Three Concepts of Free Action: II" (1975), Frankfurt seems explicit that second-order volitions result from identifying at the level of a second-order desire.

⁶⁴ Frankfurt, "Freedom" 86.

⁶⁵ Frankfurt, "Freedom" 88.

In virtue of a person's identification of himself with one of his own second-order desires, that desire becomes a second-order volition. And the person thereby *takes* responsibility for the pertinent first- and second-order desires and for the actions to which these desires lead him.⁶⁶

This is confusing, for it is unclear whether the FD model demands a second-order desire in order to create a second-order volition. It seems possible that Frankfurt modified his original view to suggest that one could identify respecting a first-order volition only if there was an intervening second-order desire. Now, I am not especially interested in looking for inconsistencies in Frankfurt's work, but rather in ensuring that we have enough clarity in our working model of our relationships to our dispositions to ground improving our understanding of identification. What is of central concern, then, is whether identification is possible directly at the level of first-order dispositions.

Consider Jane again. It seems that at the pretheoretical level we may characterize her relationship to her timidity by saying that she just does not want to be as timid as she is. In other words, Jane wants to be different than she is; we might say that she knows what she does not want. But this is not the same as giving a description of how she wants to be in positive terms. It is possible, common even, to disapprove of a state of affairs without being able to specify which state of affairs one would approve of.

The hierarchical scheme seems useful in this case. While Jane cannot describe to herself just how it is she wants to be, she does know what she does not want to be. So we say that Jane identifies *with* a second-order disposition which disapproves of her first-order disposition to be timid. But I think we might also want to be able to say that she wants to square herself against her timidity directly.

⁶⁶ Frankfurt, "Three Concepts" 119-20.

In other words, she may simply want to identify against the first-order timidity at the first-order. Consequently, it may be more accurate (as well as more economical) to say that Jane identifies directly against her first-order disposition to be timid. She knows what she wants not to be, and she acts on it without any intervening second-order disposition to disapprove of timidity. Or she may identify with the second-order disapproval as well as against the first-order timidity. Nothing precludes simultaneous identification at various orders of dispositions in the same hierarchy.

A different example, this time using one of Aristotle's dispositions which do not admit of opposites, may help make the value of negative identification more clear. Suppose Jane is envious. It is difficult to conceive of the opposite of envy. This means that, according to the standard model, there is no way of describing the first-order disposition that Jane might identify *with*. Put another way, if Jane were to try to identify at the first-order in a way that rendered her less envious, she would find herself frustrated by a sort of psychological ineffability. Jane cannot make clear to herself just what sort of positive attribute she would have inculcated, but it is clear to her what she does not want. She wants, of course, not to be envious. It is not that an identification with disapproving of her envy resonates through her, but rather that an identification against being envious resonates. Jane identifies, that is, directly against her envy.

If we think back to Friedman's remarks from the previous chapter, we can appreciate the value of first-order as well as negative identification more deeply. Recall that Friedman wants to forward the claim that the identifying self is not ontologically privileged but only logically privileged. I endorsed this approach as a way of appreciating the special psychic status of identification without having to

wrestle with difficult metaphysical conundrums in the arena of free will and determinism. In particular, it let us evade the seemingly impossible task of providing an analysis of procedural independence. But it also facilitates keeping the concept of identification distinct from any notion of hierarchical rank. This helps to make it clear, as Robert Young has noted, that a disposition's status in the hierarchy has no connection to whether we identify with it.

[W]here there is a clash between a lower-order and a higher-order desire it would seem possible to identify with the lower-order one. If so the idea of identification with such desires is independent of the notion of 'orders of desires'.⁶⁷

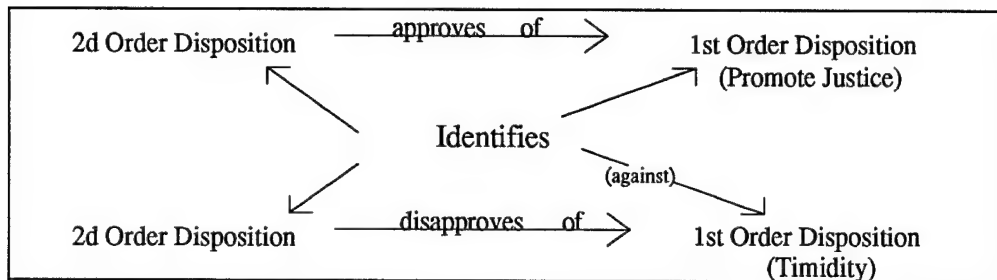
Conceiving of identification as living apart from the hierarchical array of dispositions not only simplifies handling those cases in which we identify with a lower-order disposition against a higher-order disposition but it also helps us keep the notion of "higher-order" divorced from the notion of identification or the identifying self. This streamlines the model and adds flexibility to it.

Though we may wonder just where Frankfurt stands on this issue, I want to be clear about where I stand. If it is possible to identify directly *against* a first-order disposition, it is also possible to identify *with* a first-order disposition. Jane identifies herself decisively with the promotion of justice, just as we can say that she identifies herself directly and decisively *against* her timidity.

None of this is meant to suggest that the hierarchical approach does not have its uses. Describing Jane as identifying with a second-order disapproval of her first-order disposition toward timidity as well as against her timidity directly and with a first-order disposition to promote justice provides a rich, complete

⁶⁷ Robert Young, "Autonomy and the 'Inner Self'" Christman, 80.

description of her psychic status. As Figure Three shows, such a picture is not as simple as we may like, but I think it is sufficiently accurate.



(Figure Three)

I will henceforth adopt these enhancements to the FD model. Our enhanced model explicitly permits both negative identification and identification at any order of disposition, including identification with a lower-order disposition that may be opposed by a higher-order disposition. More, it will permit simultaneous identification at various levels of any one hierarchy of dispositions without having to use one level as a conduit to another.

Identification with Actual and Possible Dispositions

Though the FD model considers explicitly only identification regarding dispositions which a person actually possesses, such as Jane's timidity, I want to argue that identifications can regard *possible* dispositions as well. This makes it possible for us to import dispositions to our characters which we otherwise would not have had.

It may at first seem implausible to say that someone could identify with (or against) a merely *possible* disposition. While everyone can relate to cases like Jane's, this is because we have access to our own actual dispositions and our

relationships to them. The case of possible dispositions, however, is conceptually more difficult.

It may be helpful to begin by considering just the idea of a disposition: for example, the idea of the disposition to eat only healthy amounts of healthy foods. Though some people may actually have this disposition, it seems likely that such persons are fairly rare. Those of us who do not have it know this disposition only as a possible part of our psyches, but it still seems reasonable to say that we can identify ourselves with it. That is, we can wish that such a disposition would actually be in us in such a way as to lead consistently to episodes of eating as our doctors would prefer. There is nothing about identification that requires it to regard only actual aspects of the psyche. And it seems that by identifying with possible dispositions, we have a method of helping to make them actual. By way of a brief example, if one identifies with the possible disposition to eat well, one might reasonably search out methods for the inculcation of that disposition. One might check into a diet facility where one is given no option but to eat well, despite one's cravings. The corollary case of identifying against a possible disposition might be found in Odysseus having himself tied to his ship's mast in anticipation of his inability to resist a forthcoming actual disposition. At the time he had himself bound to the mast, the disposition to succumb to the Sirens was only possible. Indeed, had it been actual, regardless of his identifications, he would have been rendered unable to resist joining them.

It may be objected that although the disposition to join the Sirens was only a possible disposition, there was nevertheless a higher-order disposition in place to resist that lower-order disposition. It may be best to say that Odysseus identified with an actual second-order desire to oppose a possible disposition. If this is so,

then it seems to constitute another good reason to retain the hierarchical aspect of Frankfurt's scheme. Similarly, if Jane wants to be disposed to be more courageous and identifies with that disposition, but she has never been courageous, it seems appropriate to say that she is identifying at the second order. In this case, we would have to say that we identify with an actual higher-order disposition that regards a *possible* first-order disposition.

The distinction between actual and possible dispositions may help to explain one of the processes by which people become addicted to cigarettes or other substances. A person begins by identifying with a second-order disposition for a specifically possible first-order disposition to indulge in a drug. That is, her identification is with an actual disposition to discover what it might be like to have a first-order urge and to satisfy it. All too quickly, however, what was first taken to be only a possible first-order disposition becomes an actual craving for the drug. This description of importing an addiction contains a silver lining. Although healthy foods may not be addictive, the fact that a disposition can be imported to our psyches where none existed before does suggest that identification with possible dispositions might, when conjoined to practical efforts such as having oneself forced to eat as a healthy person eats, have the effect of bringing a potential disposition into actuality in the psyche.

It may be objected that there is no such thing as a mere idea of a disposition. For example, Jane may believe that she has no "given" disposition to be righteously indignant. But, having taken a course in which she studied the depredations of Nazi Germany she can imagine the indignation of those who discovered the concentration camps. She may reflect on this disposition, which it seems is currently only a possible disposition for Jane, and discover something like

indignation rising within. Although she could not ever remember having experienced the disposition, that is because it was, so to speak, latent. The circumstances which would excite an episode of indignation had never before obtained for Jane. Just as we might discover a talent for music or languages at a more or less advanced stage of our lives, Jane discovers the disposition to be indignant which had been lurking in her psyche all along. And, now that Jane has discovered it, she may try to strengthen it through deliberately bringing on episodes of indignation.

I am of course willing to grant that at least some of the dispositions which we may think are only possible may already be lurking in our psyches sub-rosa. These dispositions, then, come to our awareness just as we think of them or imagine ourselves with them. As I am interested only in our perception of these dispositions as actually present or otherwise, the metaphysics of the matter are unimportant. The distinction between actual and possible dispositions is important primarily for the explanatory power it adds to our understanding of dispositions and identification. In the living of our lives, and in our identifications, the distinction between a latent and a possible disposition is meaningless.

Impulsive and Deliberate Identification

Identifications can vary in terms of their deliberateness. On the one hand, Jane might resemble Leontius. She might become disgusted with herself after an episode of allowing evil to prevail over good but weak innocents, and decide that she is swearing off timidity now and forever. In such a case, little if any deliberate reflection occurs; by identifying Jane is siding with her dispositions which condemn timidity and with her disposition to be courageous in much the same way that someone might intervene quickly against a child bully on a playground. Both

performances are characterized by a lack of scrutiny and planning and by the presence of an impulse to do something.

On the other hand, Jane might painstakingly weigh the cost of her timidity in terms of the sort of life she wants, discover that she wishes to be more courageous, and carefully construct a plan, taking features of her own psychology into account, to develop that disposition. Thus Jane can deliberate in two ways, one of which involves describing herself, while the other involves prescribing how she might wish to become. It is probably a mistake to think that these processes are distinct for most people--chances are the two sorts of thinking feed into each other as we compare the self we believe ourselves to be to the self we would prefer. And, though it seems likely that if someone is deliberate about trying to describe herself she will also be deliberate in trying to change herself, I shall nevertheless discuss the two sorts of deliberateness separately.

Let us suppose that Jane is deliberate about coming to an accurate description of herself. Jane must be realistic about her own timidity, appreciating its depth and what circumstances might tend to exacerbate her unwelcome disposition. If her identification opposes a well-entrenched disposition, it will be especially vulnerable to withering into resignation in that presence.⁶⁸ Jane's deliberate identification takes these facts about her dispositions into account. She may be moved to read self-help books, to invent reminders and incentive schemes, or to consider arranging her life so as to manipulate herself into behaving as if she were not a timid person.

⁶⁸ Resignation will receive the treatment it deserves in Chapter IV.

Jane can also be deliberate with respect to her prescriptions: She can work hard at making certain that the dispositions she proposes to inculcate in herself via identification withstand critical scrutiny. This might involve her doing explicit ethical thinking, as well as reflecting on the psychic impact of the modifications of her targeted dispositions on the rest of her character. Though an in-depth discussion of the matter will have to wait until later in this chapter, at least part of reason's power to assist self-determination lies in helping us to construct a picture of how our characters might be different than they are.

Just as is the case with any commitment, it seems likely, but by no means necessary, that the impulsive identification will tend to be fleeting while the more deliberate one will be more likely to remain stable. Though it may at first seem as though Jane's disgust with herself would be so aversive as to bring about a lasting change in her character, such is not necessarily the case. Jane's depth of reflection about herself is also important to her making lasting changes, though of course aversive episodes can play an important role in bringing about reflection. This is in part because serious and realistic reflection involves a consideration of the long-term effects of the identification. By thinking seriously, Jane makes herself as certain as she can be. It also seems likely that the lasting nature of her second-order disapproval of her timidity is more important to her identification with it than the degree of any one instance of mortification. A persistent gnawing in the psyche seems to have more psychic efficacy over time than an episode of intense disapproval. This is not to say that impulsive identification may not bring about enduring changes in character, but it is to say that the more deliberate the identification, and the more enduring the relevant dispositions, the more likely a long-lasting change becomes.

Although they are closely related, there is a difference between inculcating a disposition deliberately and identifying deliberately. If Jane practices moral courage in order to embody it, she is manipulating her dispositions deliberately. If, on the other hand, Jane reflects deeply and realistically as to whether she wishes to commit herself to embodying moral courage before identifying with it, then she has identified deliberately. It is likely, though not necessary, that her reflection over whether to identify included some consideration of how to embody the disposition in question.

It is worthwhile to point out one last aspect in which identifications may vary: their life span. Though it seems possible to think of identification as being represented to oneself as a discrete act, and certainly some identifications are discrete acts, identifications often tend to be long-lived. More, they tend to grow or dissipate rather than to emerge or disappear suddenly. While I grant that identification often seems to be like throwing a psychic switch (I'm through with timidity!) it might also be described as a sort of a developmental process. Indeed, as I will argue in Chapter IV, it seems possible that throwing the switch explicitly might represent a culmination of a long process of implicit identification consisting of incremental increases in the psychic strength of any given identification. The switch is symptomatic of the identification, not constitutive of it.

Dispositions

A General Characterization of Dispositions

Though my main interest is in identification instead of dispositions, I do want to give a rough idea of how I conceive of dispositions in order to provide a contrasting backdrop to my discussion of identification. I have previously

mentioned that I take dispositions to be patterns of desires which we find in ourselves. These dispositions are important constituents of our character, and as such, understanding them, as well as exercising some sort of authority over them, however indirect it may be, is key to self-determination.⁶⁹

A kind of bi-directional transitivity obtains between dispositions and actions. Dispositions make certain sorts of actions more likely, and patterns of behavior likewise seem to have some effects on dispositions. The transitivity is probabilistic in kind for there is a tendency, or liability, to behave in certain ways that having a disposition would predict, and likewise repeated activity of a specific nature tends to inculcate or strengthen an associated disposition.⁷⁰ To refer to a disposition is to refer to a more or less continuous aspect of a person's psyche that renders certain behaviors more likely than they would be in the absence of that disposition. Gilbert Ryle has described this feature of dispositions nicely:

To possess a dispositional property is not to be in a particular state, or to undergo a particular change; it is to be bound or liable to be in a particular state, or to undergo a particular change, when a particular condition is

⁶⁹ As my interest is in self-determination with respect to specifically moral aspects of character, I will tend to discuss dispositions with obvious moral implications. This should not be taken to mean, however, that only moral dispositions fit the characterization I will give in this section.

⁷⁰ That we can inculcate dispositions by practicing them is of course one of Aristotle's best known observations about human psychology. One relevant passage,

"[I]n one word, states of character arise out of like activities. This is why the activities we exhibit must be of a certain kind; it is because the states of character correspond to the differences between these. It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference." Ross, 953 (1103b21-26).

realised. The same is true about specifically human dispositions such as qualities of character. My being an habitual smoker does not entail that I am at this moment smoking; it is my permanent proneness to smoke when I am not eating, sleeping, lecturing or attending funerals, and have not recently been smoking.⁷¹

But, according to Ryle, before we can say that a disposition exists, we must believe that it is reflected by episodes of associated activity.

The tendency to ruminate and the habit of cigarette-smoking could not exist, unless there were such processes of episodes as ruminating and smoking cigarettes. 'He is smoking a cigarette now' does not say the same thing as 'he is a cigarette-smoker', but unless statements like the first were sometimes true, statements like the second could not be true.⁷²

To speak of a disposition is to speak of a tendency to act in a particular fashion. Repeated episodes of such action ground our saying that someone possesses the relevant disposition. But we must be careful, for the relationship between dispositions and their associated activities is not a one-to-one relationship. The same disposition may be manifested in many different sorts of activity.⁷³ Jane's timidity influences her activities across the spectrum of her choices. It might explain her rejection of certain career options, how she manages her money, her marriage, and her professional activities.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1949) 43.

⁷² Ryle, *Concept* 117.

⁷³ Ryle makes a similar point in *Concept* 118.

⁷⁴ This fact about first-order dispositions and the array of activities one disposition may regard sheds more light on the value of the hierarchical scheme. It is not necessary for us to consider the entire history of Jane's activities which are influenced by her timidity in order to characterize accurately and completely her disapproval of the disposition. It is enough to say that she disapproves, at the

Ryle's remarks form a convenient starting place for characterizing dispositions, but our conception of them must stress a few special features. In particular, we must be careful to state what we mean by the episodes which reflect the dispositions. For our purposes dispositions have a transitive relationship with mental activity as well as with our physically observable behavior. We can be disposed, for example, to tell a secret, and experience associated episodic impulses to spill the beans, even though we always manage to prevent ourselves from doing so. One might become self-conscious by reflecting excessively on the self, or philosophically inclined through philosophical thought. And, of course, one who is self-consciously disposed will be more likely to reflect on herself, as the philosophically inclined will be likely to think philosophical thoughts.

More, if the multi-level approach to philosophical anthropology is warranted, higher-order dispositions cannot regard physical acts, even if these acts are considered in patterns. Higher-order dispositions must regard lower order-dispositions themselves. Indeed, Jane's second-order disapproval of her first-order disposition to be timid is more than a disposition not to behave timidly--it is a disposition not to be disposed in a particular way at the first-order. Hence, we must be careful to include mental episodes in our understanding of dispositions and their transitivity to acts.

The Evaluative Nature of Higher-Order Dispositions

The key feature of higher-order dispositions is not found in their content but rather is formal or structural in nature. This feature is that they regard other

second-order, of the first-order disposition which provides a common explanatory factor for her timid decisions.

dispositions. It is necessary to stress this in order to guard against a certain ambiguity that can creep into our understanding of the FD model, and which, if it is not cleared up, might cloud attempts to show that identification is importantly distinct from dispositions. We have already hinted at this ambiguity: it lies in mistaking a disposition's being at a higher-order for a disposition's being endorsed by the person possessing it. We may be tempted into this sort of confusion because the higher-order dispositions are evaluative in the sense that they are approving or disapproving of the dispositions they regard.

We can avoid making this mistake if we notice that one may have a higher-order disposition that one wishes to disown. If this is so, then, though a higher-order disposition may represent an attitude toward a lower-order disposition, that attitude will not be psychologically privileged over that lower-order disposition except for being a disposition of a higher order. That is, there is nothing about a higher-order disposition, as we are using the term, that requires that it be a person's *own* in the sense that an identification is a person's own. A higher-order disposition is still a disposition which we may find in ourselves yet which we reject as an unwelcome part of our psyches. An example should help explain this.

Suppose that Bob, a deeply religious man, has a first-order disposition to have sex with his wife, which she reciprocates. Suppose further that Bob, having been reared in a strict and repressively puritanical environment, also has a second-order disposition which disapproves of his first-order libidinal impulses. Bob is mortified at the second order by his own first-order sexual appetite. This second-order-disposition leads Bob to refrain from intimacy, to the detriment of his marriage. Bob loves his wife, values his marriage, and understands that his second-order disposition is morally unwarranted. He has discussed the matter with his

wife, and his close friends, and they have all confirmed his belief that monogamous sexual activity is perfectly OK. He has even received pastoral counseling within his church, which has reassured him further. Yet he is still pestered by the second-order disapproval and identifies against it. He knows his prudishness is unreasonable and he wishes he did not have this part of his psyche, but it is there, evidently well settled in his character, despite its being unwelcome.

Bob has a second-order disposition which is evaluative, but the evaluation is not an evaluation he wants to hold. It is not *his* evaluation. This helps us reinforce still further Friedman's and Young's view that there is no necessary connection between a disposition's being at a higher order and its being endorsed by the person who possesses it. A disposition occupies a particular position in the stack only on account of there being other dispositions which it regards. Identification can occur at any order; it is uninfluenced by a disposition's position. Higher-order dispositions are not higher in any but a logical sense--there is nothing about being a higher-order disposition that makes it any more welcome a member of the psyche. Identification, by contrast, just is, in part, the making welcome or unwelcome of a disposition of whatever order. Dispositions may be thought of as psychic "givens," over which our authority is indirect at best; identifications are kinds of psychic involvement respecting these "givens" by which we exercise our indirect authority over them.

It is of course possible for a person to have just the array of dispositions that he identifies with. We can imagine Bob's brother Bert, who has first- and second-order dispositions that are just like Bob's. That is, he is mortified at the second order by his first-order sexual urges. But unlike Bob, Bert believes himself to have been called to be a Catholic priest, and he has heeded that call. As such,

Bob is grateful for his second-order disapproval, and identifies with it. Nothing precludes the serendipitous harmony of our psyches.

The Working Characterization of Dispositions

Let us review briefly our working characterization of dispositions before moving ahead to the next topic: reason's relationship to identification. First, they have a special sort of transitivity respecting activity. That is, they are tendencies to act in certain ways, including certain mental ways. One disposition can, therefore, serve to explain any number of actions. Dispositions may grow stronger or weaker as the activities to which they are transitively linked are performed more or less frequently, but there is nothing episodic about dispositions themselves. They exist over the psychic long term, and modifying them is likewise a long-term affair. Dispositions do not seem to be directly under our authority, regardless of their place in a hierarchy. More, though they may seem reasonable, they are not susceptible to reason's counsel. Dispositions are evaluative at the higher orders, but these evaluations may be alien to the person whose dispositions express them.

Putting all of this together, then, a disposition is a more or less settled conative aspect of the self that is not directly under our authority but which can nevertheless be evaluative at the higher orders. It is blind to reason, but enjoys a certain transitivity respecting many different activities, including purely mental activities. A disposition can be strengthened or weakened via well-conceived habituation, and a disposition to act in some fashion makes acts of that fashion more likely. Nonetheless, for our purposes it is possible to have a disposition that is never reflected in overt behavior.

Reason's Role in Identification

I have argued above that higher-order dispositions are evaluative of lower-order dispositions which they regard, but that it is a mistake to think that there is anything psychologically privileged about these evaluations. As Bob's case makes clear, they may be unwelcome features of the psyche against which we may identify. Even higher-order dispositions are still dispositions, and as such may contravene reason's counsel. By contrast, the identifying self has a privileged view of other aspects of the self, including dispositions, and is able to hear the counsels of reason. At least at first blush, then, we might suppose that identification must be rational. If this is so, reason may be the wedge we need to distinguish identification from higher-order dispositions. Let us see whether this is so.

It seems that it is just our reason that gives us an ability to stand back from our dispositions and judge them as a referee judges the actions of players in a contest. Reason is a powerful tool for facilitating objectification. Using it we can generate accounts of the sources of our dispositions to help us understand them more fully, and we can work out the question of their compatibility with other aspects of the self. It is reason that shows Jane the value of justice and the disvalue of envy, and it is reason that lets Bob understand the moral permissibility of marital sex. Dispositions display none of these sorts of competencies. Indeed, dispositions often seem to be problematic in our characters specifically because they are not reasonable.

More, the FD model includes a requirement for at least some degree of rational capacity as a condition of identification. Dworkin has written that "the capacity to raise the question of whether I will identify with or reject the reasons

for which I act now" is "crucial to being autonomous."⁷⁵ Frankfurt agrees that identification requires a rational capacity. "[I]t is only in virtue of his rational capacities that a person is capable of becoming critically aware of his own will and of forming volitions of the second order. The structure of a person's will presupposes, accordingly, that he is a rational being."⁷⁶ Gary Watson endorses this view, and, with Plato, takes it further to suggest that reason has a motivating aspect.

Plato . . . [called] attention to the fact that it is one thing to think a state of affairs good, worthwhile, or worthy of promotion, and another simply to desire or want that state of affairs to obtain. Since the notion of value is tied to (cannot be understood independently of) those of the good and worthy, it is one thing to value (think good) a state of affairs and another to desire that it obtain. However, to think a thing good is at the same time to desire it (or its promotion). Reason is thus an original spring of action. It is because valuing is essentially related to thinking or *judging* good that it is appropriate to speak of the wants that are (or perhaps arise from) evaluations as belonging to, or originating in, the rational (that is, *judging*) part of the soul; values provide *reasons* for action. The contrast is with desires, whose objects may not be thought good and which are thus, in a natural sense, blind or irrational.⁷⁷

For Watson our dispositions motivate us to behave in ways which can contradict our rationality. Through rational reflection, however, we can determine what is valuable and, upon making such determinations, we necessarily value those things for ourselves. What we have been calling the identifying self, then, is distinct from the dispositions just because it can be motivated by rational considerations.

⁷⁵ Dworkin, *Theory* 15.

⁷⁶ Frankfurt, "Freedom" 87.

⁷⁷ Gary Watson, "Free Agency" Christman 112.

Watson's endorsement of the assertion that reason can serve us a source of motivation is of course not universally shared, but we will wait until Chapter V to approach that controversy. Of more immediate import is the distinction between the capacity to reason and the effective use of that capacity. I accept the claim that having some rational capacity is necessary for having the ability to identify, but I do not want to grant that identifications must necessarily be rational. Even if reason can motivate certain identifications, and even if a rational capacity is a necessary condition of identification, that does not necessarily imply that reason is a causal spring in all identifications, or indeed that identification must accord to reason in a way that dispositions may not. If this is correct then it does not seem that we can use reason as a wedge to distinguish identifications from dispositions.

Thinking back to the difference between impulsive and deliberate identification can help make this clear. Even the most deliberate reflection may fail to capture something vital to identifying well. But of course not all identifications are this deliberate. Even people who possess excellent reasoning skills may still fail to employ them. Nothing about identification entails its being well thought out or performed in light of a full appreciation of all the relevant facts. Identification can occur in the absence of wisdom or prudence. All that seems necessary for an identification is an objectification of some disposition, some pro- or con-attitude regarding it, and a psychic referee's call. And, while the objectification is certainly more likely to reflect the facts, and the calls likely to be more wise, if reason plays an important role in identification, that is not to say that we cannot misunderstand ourselves or that we cannot identify in ways that we might regret later. As is the case with any commitment, rational people can bind themselves without having brought all the relevant factors into full reflective light. But a commitment that is

made without due reflection is still a commitment. Consequently we cannot use the wedge of rationality to separate a disposition from an identification except in the limited sense of noting that the identifying self can appreciate reason's counsel directly while dispositions cannot.

Identification, Reason, and Self-Determination

Theorists of autonomy disagree over just what degree of rationality is required for autonomy.⁷⁸ I am not interested in taking sides in that debate. But I do want to point out that rationality is more important for a theory of autonomy than it is for our interests in identification and self-determination. Christman, who "would defend the claim that only minimal 'internal' conditions for rationality (like consistency of beliefs and desires) would be plausible as conditions for autonomy,"⁷⁹ has suggested that: "[T]he reflection that is required for autonomy must involve certain cognitive faculties that are characteristic of a person with a settled and accurate conception of herself."⁸⁰ More, if our thinking is sloppy enough to include contradictions, our autonomy is threatened. For Christman, a person is "not autonomous if there are beliefs, plausibly attributable to the agent, which are manifestly inconsistent."⁸¹

⁷⁸ For a thoughtful discussion of reason's relationship to autonomy see Lawrence Haworth, *Autonomy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) esp. 27-42.

⁷⁹ Christman, "Autonomy and Personal History" 14.

⁸⁰ Christman, "Autonomy and Personal History" 13.

⁸¹ Christman, "Autonomy and Personal History" 17.

Whether or not this is true for autonomy, I want to distance myself from this view as far as it relates to my specific interest in self-determination and identification. As is the case with many human capacities, it is possible to use our ability to identify to our own detriment. Our showcase example of Jane may in some ways be misleading. Jane has a certain dispositional array which she has reflected upon in the light of certain normative principles. She has discovered her character wanting, and she identifies herself in a way so as to reject her excess timidity and embrace moral courage. Her reasoning capacity, then, has come into play to perform a task of self-evaluation. It has also come into play to help her grasp the value of justice and to appreciate how her current character is defective when measured against some ideal. Jane can employ her reason further to map out a plan of action for changing her character, perhaps by joining the Marines or enrolling in Outward Bound. And we can imagine Jane being successful, to some degree at least, in her project of self-determination.

But it is not difficult to imagine cases in which persons could determine themselves for the worse just as Jane determines herself for the better. And we need not imagine that these people are evil, or even insane. Ordinary people can do harm to themselves simply by making some mistakes. Our adolescent smoker comes to mind.

There is no point in running through a depressing list of the mistakes people make, but there is a point in considering whether there is anything about making mistakes that undermines identification or self-determination. I want to show that even though we may regret an identification, we cannot say that it was for that reason alien to us.

There are at least two ways in which we might make a mistaken identification. First, we might misconstrue the object of identification--that is, we might suffer a failure in describing the self accurately. Second, we may fail to appraise the value of some disposition or how well having it would integrate with a good character--a failure in ethical reflection. Both of these lead to identifications that we regret, but neither mistake precludes identification.

Let us consider the first sort of mistake. We can identify with a misunderstood disposition. This is logically possible no matter how deeply we reflect on the disposition, for there is nothing about even the most thorough self-evaluation that entails accuracy. Indeed, it is a commonplace that sometimes self-discovery comes only as a result of making a mistake. For example, an adolescent might find in himself what he understands to be a religious disposition. He believes he has a first-order disposition to play an active role in his local church, to learn more of its history and its role in the culture and practices of charity and relief. He identifies with this religious disposition and by so doing exercises some degree of self-determination over his character. He enters a seminary with an eye to entering the clergy. But as he learns more about religion and thinks more about his life, he begins to wonder whether he really understood the disposition with which he identifies. He may come to redefine his disposition as a disposition to behave beneficently toward fellow creatures. Finding that his role as a clergyman is unlikely to accord as fully with the disposition as he now understands it, he resigns from the seminary to pursue a career in medicine.

We may be tempted to say that this case does not count as a case of identification. But a mistaken identification is still an identification. To misunderstand the object of identification does nothing to qualify the identification

itself. In other words, he was mistaken about *what* he really wanted to endorse, but not over *whether* he really wanted to endorse it. To deny an identification on grounds of regret is to be disingenuous.

J. L. Austin has captured this sort of distinction nicely.

[Suppose] you have a donkey, so have I, and they graze in the same field. The day comes when I conceive a dislike for mine. I go to shoot it, draw a bead on it, fire: the brute falls in its tracks. I inspect the victim, and find to my horror that it is *your* donkey.⁸²

A shooting has occurred, but the wrong thing was shot. Still, just as mistaking one donkey for another does nothing to preclude the killing of a donkey, mistaking the object of an identification does not prevent the identification from taking place with full psychic effect. Misunderstanding the object of identification does not imply that we are mistaken over whether we identify. Rather, our mistake lies in how we construe the identification's object.

The second sort of mistake is a normative version of the first. Just as we might misdescribe a disposition and identify with that misdescription, so we might misunderstand the value of a particular disposition as it relates to our character.

Another example may clarify this sort of misunderstanding. A college student may come to put a high value on social justice. Desiring to conform his character to this value, he begins to identify with a preexisting disposition to do violence to those whom he takes to be unjustly economically advantaged. He works to strengthen this disposition, and to harden his heart so that he can commit acts of terror in the name of social justice.

⁸² J. L. Austin, "A Plea for Excuses," *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961) 133, n. 1.

Our student understands the import of social justice, but makes a mistake in putting a high value on his own violent tendencies. The error here is not in his understanding of his disposition, but in his understanding of that disposition's value in a character devoted to social justice. His efforts at self-determination are effective, but it is just because they are effective that they work to the detriment of his character. He fails to appreciate the negative effects that identifying with a violent disposition have on the consistency of his character. His integrity suffers, as does social justice, because of his mistaken belief that his violence can be a servant of the social justice he values.

The case of the student terrorist is of course an extreme one, but the difficulty of coming to an intelligent characterization of how one wants to be may manifest itself in our lives so commonly as to be unremarked. While it seems safe to say that even though it may not be explicit or accurate, some sort of pro- or con-attitude about a disposition is a precondition of our identifying with respect to it, that is not to be confused with saying that the attitude is a well-considered or a reasonable one. Many identify with a disposition to be popular or wealthy because they misunderstand the contributions these dispositions make to a good character.

There is, of course, no way to guarantee to ourselves that we understand ourselves or what it is best to do for our characters. Whatever else we may say about it, however, coming to understand ourselves and what we want seems to be rationally informed. And it seems likely that the better the reason applied to the project, the more accurate an understanding of the self is apt to be. Gaining a decent understanding of some disposition, making it clear to ourselves, and believing that it can be other than it is all seem to be part of the process.

Reason and Character Development

We have seen that we can develop our characters for the worse by identifying mistakenly. Identifying well, accordingly, is facilitated by a certain degree of self-understanding. Indeed, without such a self-understanding, a fully satisfying self-determination may continually escape us. Consequently, if we are to determine ourselves well we should work toward drawing accurate self-portraits. This involves reason explicitly in projects of researching the self and evaluating it in critical light. This does not guarantee success, but it does make it more likely, and that is all we have any right to expect. Indeed, if we are to insist on perfect self-knowledge before identifying we will likely never identify. The self-knowledge we gain through serious and honest assessment of ourselves may not be perfect, but it is, in general, good enough.

Avoiding mistakes in how we understand ourselves is the task of reason, just as it is in general the task of reason to help us avoid making mistakes in our lives. Having a decent education, of course, can be advantageous here. The power of formal education to refine reasoning skills, as well as to impart insights into human nature, may be reflected in improving the accuracy of self-evaluation. Whatever independence we can enjoy from the pull of dispositions seems to depend on the capacity to objectify an aspect of the self, and it seems likely that reasoning can play an important role in getting the facts straight about the disposition objectified. Likewise, whatever independence we have from the effects of socialization seems as well to depend at least in part on our capacities as rational beings. That is, it depends on our being able to distance ourselves from outside influences, to understand the processes by which we are socialized, and to appreciate the cultural heritage under which we are reared. Though this

understanding may operate mostly in hindsight, given the relatively late stage at which critical reflective capability develops in our lives, it remains the best instrument for such an examination, belated though it may be.

But we must be careful. Genitive accounts of our dispositions are, I think, for the most part unilluminating if not distracting. We can do nothing about the past. There is little to be gained in developing our characters by worrying over the sources of various dispositions except insofar as these causal hypotheses can assist us in manipulating ourselves for the better. But that is not to say that introspection is useless. Indeed, coming to know ourselves may sometimes involve listening to other people's insights about us. We can gain some appreciation of this from Robert Young's example of a neurotic's coming to self-awareness through psychotherapy.

[T]he securing of a degree of autonomy in a person's living where previously neurotic forces held sway cannot occur without awareness of the operation of such forces. What has been hidden from the agent: his instinctual impulses, his unconscious defensive maneuverings to avoid facing these impulses, perhaps even his resistance to the uncovering of these aspects of his being, have to be so revealed that the agent can see the inappropriateness of the behavior all this produces. . . . Now I am not for one minute suggesting that we take an uncritical attitude to such techniques but there can be no doubt that sometimes they work and that when they do it is partly because they develop self-awareness in the agent. . . . Where the agent actively participates in the redirecting of his cognitive and affective structures he can identify with the changed or renewed self as continuous with, though different from, his neurotic one.⁸³

With this case in hand we can better understand how reason plays a role in informing identification. Recasting the example in our terms, what happens seems to be this: A person is enabled to change his identification in the light of a new

⁸³ Robert Young, "Autonomy and the Inner Self" 82-83.

(and presumably more accurate) understanding of a disposition. Notice that this does nothing to undermine his having identified with the disposition as he understood it prior to his therapy. The crucial distinction I want to maintain is between being mistaken over whether we identify and being mistaken respecting the object of the identification. I believe we commit the latter sort of mistake with some frequency. I think the former psychologically impossible.⁸⁴

None of this is to suggest that we should discount the importance of reason for informing our identifications. While it offers no guarantee of accuracy or perfection, reason is still a powerful tool to facilitate good self-determination. It can make clear the worth of having certain dispositions, regardless of whether we have them *because* of reason. By reflecting on our dispositions, we can appreciate that there are good justifications for identifying with some of them, regardless of whether we had any say in their being inculcated in us. To see how this might work, let us consider a case suggested by Lawrence Haworth. Haworth writes with individual acts in mind, but his illustration applies with equal force to dispositions. The case involves a mechanic who must repair a car. The procedures he follows may have been developed by others, but in order to achieve the end laid out for him, he makes those reasons his own.

One effect of critical reflection is to cause the activity it guides to come out from under the control of other people. By finding his own reasons for acting as he does, the mechanic severs the ties to others that result from

⁸⁴ I will explore the role of self-regarding moral emotions in Chapter IV. For now let me indicate my belief that our feeling regret over past commitments provides evidence of the distinction between whether one has identified and what object it is appropriate to identify with. I think it is in the notion that we committed ourselves by mistake that makes regret as unpleasant as it is. If we could tell ourselves that we never actually identified, regret would be less devastating.

slavishly mimicking their preferred way of realizing the goal he is intent on. If he mindlessly followed others, he would be living their life, not his own.⁸⁵

There is nothing that requires that we develop our own rationales for particular acts or dispositions. It is enough that we understand and endorse reasons; their ultimate source is irrelevant. Though this view contrasts with the stress Christman places on the etiology of our dispositions, it is nevertheless a more useful approach to the matter, given the difficulties we have had in unscrambling the metaphysical entanglements of procedural independence. What is important is that they become our reasons in a psychological sense, regardless of their histories. These reasons can justify our having certain dispositions even if they do not motivate us to have them. Our acts can find their springs in dispositions yet can be explained in terms of our own reasons. The understanding of the disposition is not necessary for either the identification or the act, but it is part of understanding ourselves. This includes understanding how the disposition integrates with the rest of our character.

When we take the advantage reason affords we gain a great deal for developing our characters. We can gain an independence from our dispositions because we can inspect them under the light of reason. We can predict the consequences of possessing certain dispositions and estimate how they would integrate into our psychic field. And, of course, reason may show a certain disposition to be unwelcome. If we cannot understand the worth of some disposition in our lives, then that might constitute a good reason not to identify with it, or perhaps even to identify against it.

⁸⁵ Lawrence Haworth, *Autonomy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) 28.

We should be careful, though, of utopian expectations. Reason does not have all the answers we'd like it to have. Still, it is the most competent psychic assistant to identification. As a matter of practical fact, some measure of self-knowledge counts as sufficient knowledge to explain an identification, just as some level of knowledge counts as sufficient to make other kinds of decisions or commitments. We rarely demand perfect knowledge of our world, and knowledge of the self is no different in this respect. Indeed, too much reflection can do more harm than too little.

Though an in-depth discussion of the matter will have to wait until the next chapter, it should be noted here that it is possible to identify well without any explicit counsel from reason at all. Regardless of whether any given identification is rationally informed, though, it is important to keep in mind that identification can benefit from reason's counsel in a way that dispositions cannot. The identifying self can listen to reason, though nothing logically requires that it do so.

If we generalize this phenomenon to include cases of commitment in general, we find that it is altogether possible to commit mistakenly. That is, we may make a commitment that we would not have made had we been better informed before making the commitment.

It should not be inferred, however, that cases of mistaken commitment are always the result of some sort of deception or even ignorance. It is certainly possible to commit impulsively, injudiciously or unreasonably, even if one is in possession of all the relevant facts.⁸⁶ Gullibility does not undermine the

⁸⁶ It may seem, then, that identifications can be made capriciously, as Frankfurt has suggested. This seems mistaken. The nature of a commitment is such that it is incompatible with frivolity or caprice. Caprice undermines an

genuineness of identification. As with any commitment, identification can be grounds for regrets later.

All of this lends support to the claim that identification is importantly distinct from other psychic kinds, because, as I will argue at length in the next chapter, it suggests that our identifications are accessible to mind in a way that other aspects of ourselves may not be. One can identify with a misconception, but the misconception is properly understood as applying to the psychic object of identification, not to the identification itself. It is disingenuous to claim that because we dislike the consequences of an imprudent commitment there was no commitment in the first place. It is not that we misunderstand whether we have made a commitment, but rather that the object or consequence of the commitment is not to our liking.

Though I have argued that we cannot use the criterion of rationality to mark identifications off from dispositions, there is another distinction which holds more promise. Our identifications are accessible to us in a way that dispositions may not be. I will argue for this distinction in Chapter IV, where I will grant that though identifications may be implicit they must, in order to *be* identifications, be accessible to mind. While we may have dispositions and be ignorant of them, this cannot be true for an identification if it is to be the act of "putting oneself behind" some other aspect of the self. That we have shot at the donkey is clear in a way that whatever we hit may not be. Our knowledge of our identifications is accessible, though we do not always access it, more directly than our knowledge of the dispositions with which we identify.

identification in the same way that giggling undermines an apology. Cf. Frankfurt, "Freedom" 89, n. 6.

Summary

My aim in this chapter has been to pave the way more firmly for an analysis of identification. I have tried to show how identifications may manifest themselves in various ways, and to simplify and clarify how they might relate to dispositions. In particular, I have suggested that we should permit both negative and first-order identifications, as well as identification with a disposition that is only possible, and that identifications can vary in terms of their deliberateness.

I have offered a rough characterization of dispositions, noting that regardless of their order in a hierarchical scheme, they may nevertheless be unwelcome members of the psychic community. I have argued that identification is unrelated to a disposition's order in the hierarchy, and I have suggested that dispositions enjoy a transitive relationship with episodes of activity, to include mental activity.

Last, I have argued that reason is important to developing good characters because it is important to determining ourselves well. This is expressly because there is nothing about the psychological nature of identification that necessitates that it be reasonable.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT IT MEANS TO IDENTIFY

Improving our understanding of identification itself as a psychic phenomenon is important from both practical and theoretical perspectives. On the practical level identification is key to self-determination. At the level of theoretical philosophical anthropology, the otherwise promising FD model seems inadequate without some account of identification. It is therefore my aim in this chapter to begin work toward some elements of a theory of identification.

We know that if we apply the FD model to dispositions the process of identification is the process of somehow psychically embracing or putting ourselves behind some of them while, in complement, rejecting others. The process of identification is the process of psychic integration, of "making welcome" some aspect of our character. Or, it may be the process of distancing ourselves from some disposition which we possess but wish we did not. Yet the FD model does not provide much by way of explanation of this crucial process.

I do not believe that a fully satisfactory account is within grasp, but I do think that some headway can be made toward an account. My intent is not so much to finish an account of identification as to start one. To that end, I will offer a working hypothesis to serve as a way of guiding investigation. Using it I hope to cover some of the most controversial issues which would be attendant to any adequate account of identification. The most fundamental project in providing the beginning of an account will be to defend identification as a psychic kind *sui generis*. In particular, it will be necessary to distinguish identifications from dispositions--particularly higher-order dispositions.

To begin I have framed an approximate characterization of what features it seems must be true of identification compatible with the rest of the FD model. These have served to focus my discussion so far and will be of further use in roughing out an analysis of identification itself.

First, identifications cannot be hidden from the person making them any more than an author's work can be hidden from her. This does not mean, though, that an identification is always present to mind, though it does mean that self-deception regarding our identifications is unlikely, if not impossible.

Second, identification seems to be a kind of psychic self-involvement or participation.⁸⁷ Dispositions, by contrast, demand no psychic involvement at all.

Third, identification is purposive. Even if it is impulsive or misguided, it is not capricious.⁸⁸ There is, so to speak, a psychic point to any given identification.

Fourth, because of its being under our authority in a way that dispositions are not, identification seems to be crucial to our self-determination.

Fifth, what is true of commitments in general often seems to be true of identifications. In particular, both commitments and identifications share the

⁸⁷ Though identification is a certain sort of psychic activity, I wish to avoid using that term at this juncture because it may imply that identification must be explicit, and I do not want to imply that. Later in the chapter I will clarify the sorts of activity that can characterize identification.

⁸⁸ This is another point of departure from Frankfurt who wrote, in 1971, that "[A] person may be capricious and irresponsible in forming his second-order volitions and give no serious consideration to what is at stake. Second-order volitions express evaluations only in the sense that they are preferences. There is no essential restriction on the kind of basis, if any, upon which they are formed." Frankfurt, *Freedom* 89, n. 6.

feature of entailing a willingness on the part of the person making them to defend them.

Sixth, identifications can ground self-regarding moral emotions.

These considerations find convenient summation in a working definition: "Identification is the authoritative and purposive commitment of the self by the self to a particular way of being."

It must be pointed out that this list of characteristics and the accompanying working definition are meant to form some starting points for the development of a theory of identification and no more. I will defend neither their completeness nor their precision. Nor is this list of features meant to constitute an outline of the chapter. Although I will discuss and defend each characteristic I do not intend to consider them independently of each other. My approach will be to consider them as a whole--that is as a set of interrelated and mutually supporting claims about identification.

Identification's Accessibility to Mind

I want to approach the characterization of identification as a distinct psychic kind by explaining the assertion that identification is distinct from dispositions in part because the former is accessible to mind in a way that the latter may not be. While we may be mistaken or uncertain about both our dispositions and whether we ultimately wish to identify with a given disposition, I want to show that, for ordinary people at least, it is impossible to deceive ourselves respecting *whether* we have identified. This is because to identify is to become involved in a purposive way with respect to an aspect of the self as that aspect is understood. It does not happen by accident--we are never surprised to find that we have identified (though we may be surprised to learn certain features of the identification's object).

When we think of identification under the FD model we most often think of explicit identification, as in Jane's identification against her timidity. Clearly, if something is done explicitly then it is not hidden. But it may be that not all identifications are made explicitly. Joel Kupperman has put it well.

It is very tempting to believe that the formation of the self within a psychological field involves, first, the occurrence of various thoughts and desires, and second, a process of endorsement and rejection in which a person accepts some of these--coming, as we say, to identify with them--and rejects others. . . . The boy who is on his way to being a carefree and inconsiderate man not only has a variety of carefree and inconsiderate thoughts and desires but, typically, is happy (or at least not too unhappy) at having them, and is likely to dwell on such thoughts and desires more than on those of a contrary nature.⁸⁹

Thus far, Kupperman seems to accept the standard explicit picture of identification. But he formulates his objection soon enough:

[I]t is clear that if someone who is growing up endorses or decides to accept a pattern of thought and desire, this endorsement is likely not to take the form of explicit positive judgment. The boy is unlikely to say, "I like carefree and inconsiderate thinking." Something a little like this is possible, but what is more likely is that the boy simply will be content with, or not dissatisfied with, such a pattern of thought without any reflective judgment's taking place.⁹⁰

It may be said, in response to Kupperman, that his case is misleading because it involves a child. But this response is unpersuasive. Kupperman could have cited a carefree and inconsiderate adult with no loss to the force of his objection. The fact of the matter seems to be that many identifications occur without much or any explicit reflection. Indeed, there seem to be good reasons for

⁸⁹ Joel Kupperman, *Character* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 49-50.

⁹⁰ Kupperman, *Character* 50.

guarding against a requirement that explicit self-evaluation be part of the process of identification. Joseph Raz, writing in the more broad but closely related context of autonomy, has cautioned against an overly intellectualized conception of personal autonomy because it seems too exclusive.⁹¹ Gerald Dworkin sums up this concern.

If we think of the process of reflection and identification as being a conscious, fully articulated, and explicit process, then it will appear that it is mainly professors of philosophy who exercise autonomy and that those who are less educated, or who are by nature or upbringing less reflective, are not, or not as fully, autonomous individuals. But a farmer living in an isolated rural community, with a minimal education, may without being aware of it be conducting his life in ways which indicate he has shaped and molded his life according to reflective procedures. This will be shown not by what he says about his thoughts, but in what he tries to change in his life, what he criticizes about others, the satisfaction he manifests (or fails to) in his work, family, and community.⁹²

Even for the well educated, critical self-examination and subsequent endorsement or rejection of some aspect of the self are fairly rare, but this is not to say that identification is equally rare. It seems, then, that identifications are possible along a spectrum of implicitness to explicitness. But this bears close examination, for if it is true that identification can be implicit, then it would be easy to mistake some of our more implicit identifications for dispositions which we acquired in utter passivity, and of which we are altogether, perhaps even invincibly,

⁹¹ Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (New York: Clarendon, 1988) 371.

⁹² Dworkin, *Theory* 17. Raz makes a similar point about persons' goals. "Some of . . . [his] goals a person may have adopted deliberately, some he may have chosen. Others he may have drifted into, grown up with, never realized that anyone could fail to have them, etc." *The Morality of Freedom* 290-91.

ignorant. Worse, it may be impossible to justify distinguishing implicit identifications from dispositions. Yet it also seems that there is nothing about identification's accessibility that demands its being explicit. All that seems necessary to preclude self-deception about identifications is that there be nothing precluding our bringing them readily to mind. Identification has active and purposive aspects that dispositions do not. When we participate in our selves by identification, we are making an active psychic effort, however minuscule or implicit, and as such we should be able to acknowledge that effort as authors of it. The same cannot be said of dispositions. Our relationship to our dispositions can be that of a bystander; our relationship to our identifications, by contrast, is always as a participant. What is significant here about this sort of participation or engagement, though, is not so much its being at the forefront of our consciousness or self-image, but rather that it is difficult to hide from ourselves.

This requires an explanation. To begin, let us consider in some depth the variation of identifications in terms of their being explicit to the identifier.

Whether Identification Must Be Explicit: Two Approaches

There are easy cases of identification, such as Jane's identifying against her timidity. This case is, as is often the way with hypothetical cases, about as obvious as it can be. Her identification is unambiguously explicit. Jane has a well-considered portrait of her timidity and identifies explicitly with her second-order disposition regarding it, as well as identifying against it at the first-order. In other words, Jane has arrayed herself clearly and consciously against her excessive timidity.

But we need to inquire whether Jane's making her identification explicit could not be just a part of a longer-term process. We grant that a disease is in

place before the symptoms come into view, and so likewise we might want to say an identification is in place before it raises any explicit awareness. Jane may have been involving herself in a low-intensity psychic conflict, siding with her second-order disapproval of her first-order timidity, but never making her involvement explicit. I have suggested that we think of this sort of implicit identification as living near one end of a spectrum. At the near end we find cases of unambiguous explicit identification such as Jane's resolution against her timidity, but to illustrate the far end adequately requires introducing another case.

Mary's Implicit Identification

Suppose Mary grew up in a polite family. Her parents almost always treated each other and the rest of the family with gentle respect, and they expected the same from their children. On the rare occasion of a lapse on their part they would always make a point of apologizing and would likewise expect an apology if any of the children behaved offensively. As a result, Mary enjoyed generally harmonious and pleasant domestic living during her childhood and adolescence.

Now, given her background, it seems that Mary will likely be disposed to behave politely and to expect politeness from others. This disposition has been gradually and deeply embedded in her character by years of environmental influence; politeness is, for Mary, so commonplace as to be unremarkable.

Let us propose, for the sake of argument, that Mary identifies with her disposition as well, but this identification is implicit. She is involved with her disposition favoring politeness, but her involvement is tacit. It is never mentioned, either to herself or to others. Harmony between Mary's polite disposition and her polite family is pervasive, and as such, her identification with her disposition never explicitly comes to mind. In contrast to Jane, whose identification against her

timidity seems to have been like the throwing of a psychic switch, Mary's identification has been more like a gradual process of psychic development.

Suppose now that Mary goes off to college and moves into a dorm. This new environment is, to say the least, decidedly more rough-edged than life with her family. Where high-school Mary had enjoyed harmony between her dispositions and her environment at home, college Mary now encounters a pronounced dissonance. Her disposition favoring politeness, as well as her identification with it, come abruptly to the psychic surface shortly after arriving at college. Her disposition to behave politely is highlighted to her by its contrast with the comparatively crude environment. But it is not just this fact about her character that comes to mind. Mary has an interest in keeping her dignity; she wants to protect her politeness. This involvement with her polite disposition is explicit to her. She does not wish to fit in with her adolescent surroundings--rather she finds the environment distasteful and resolves to maintain her standards.

Mary never made her identification explicit when she lived at home. Though there was on occasion some small participation on her part in keeping herself polite, this participation was measured in inches where Jane's seems to be measured in yards. Politeness simply never came to Mary's mind in the vivid way that timidity came to Jane's. Instead, it took the shock of entering the college environment to make Mary's involvement with her politeness explicit. It may be that, had she never lived in the dorms, she never would have come to realize her identification with her polite disposition; it simply would have been another piece of her psychic background.

Before proceeding, we must ask whether this example begs the question. High-school Mary's politeness was to her so unexceptional as to be overlooked. If

this is so, what justifies calling it an identification? It may be that Mary merely had a disposition to be polite, but identified with it only when she encountered the crude environment. After all, there would be nothing odd about having grown up with a particular disposition, but identifying with it only when a new environment seems to threaten the disposition. In other words, was high-school Mary identifying with her politeness or was her politeness no more than a disposition?

There seem to be good reasons behind both claims. On the one hand, high-school Mary certainly seemed to be involved with her politeness--there were moments when she had to remind herself to be polite. Her politeness was not merely something she possessed, for she sometimes became engaged with herself, making minor psychic course corrections in order to keep impolite thoughts to herself. On the other hand, she never consciously said to herself that she must make herself a more polite person; she just stepped herself toward politeness when it seemed necessary in much the same way a successful dieter steps himself away from gustatory temptation. We need to inquire whether cases like high-school Mary's count as cases of identification. If they do not, a requirement for the explicitness of identification seems justified; if they do count as identifications, then the account of identification must be broad enough to encompass them while still making clear the distinction between an identification and a disposition.

It may be helpful to take a brief detour and approach this question from another angle: that of decision making in general. Let us turn to some of Joel Kupperman's remarks on the topic:

[T]here is a sense in which A decides to do X if A does X voluntarily, whether or not it occurs to A to ask whether he or she should do X. Thus I

might be said to have decided to teach my classes last October 4th, even though there was no conscious formulation of a choice in the matter.⁹³

Though one might question whether it is proper to use the term "decision" to apply to such cases, Kupperman's point is well taken. Much of what we do, including relating to our characters, seems to be similar to Kupperman's teaching his classes in October. Like good but easily overlooked neighbors, many, perhaps most aspects of our characters are welcome but unexceptional, and as such, they are rarely if ever singled out in consciousness.

It may seem that Kupperman's example is misleading. Though it may be the case that he simply taught his classes last October 4th without ever asking himself whether he would teach them, there is nevertheless a very high likelihood that he did ask himself at some prior time what sort of schedule he wanted for the fall semester. Kupperman made an explicit decision about teaching in October sometime during the spring of that year, and so his example does not tell against the claim that his decision really was explicit. I am willing to grant this for the sake of argument, but even having done so there still seem to be good reasons for suspecting that at least some decisions are made implicitly. Kupperman illustrates such a case of implicit decision making nicely in another example.

It is well known that decisions frequently are the result of a gradual process of 'making up one's mind' of which the agent may not be totally aware, so that it is not uncommon for someone to reach the point of decision and to realize that he or she has already made the decision. Slips of the tongue sometimes indicate that the process is complete. A woman may think of herself as deciding whether to move to Boston or St. Louis, and can find

⁹³ Joel Kupperman, "Character and Self-Knowledge," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 85 (1984-1985): 231.

herself saying to a friend, 'When I am in Boston...', realizing then with a shock that in some sense she had unawares reached a decision.⁹⁴

While Kupperman uses this case to raise the possibility that predictions about oneself are reducible to expressions of desires, the crucial aspects of the example for us lie elsewhere in the suggestion that one may *realize* something about oneself that has come about implicitly. While Kupperman is not directly concerned with the phenomenon of identification, he has put his finger on an interesting phenomenon which it will be worthwhile to consider carefully. The question is this: When we "reach the point of decision and realize that we have already made the decision" have we already decided, or is the realization somehow a necessary condition of something's being a decision at all? In terms of identification, then, we would ask whether we can identify before or without ever realizing it or whether the realization or conscious acknowledgment is somehow key to identification. In other words, do identifications need to be explicit before they are identifications at all?

I propose to explore two paths with respect to this question. First I will travel the avenue that assumes identification must be explicit. I will call this the narrow description, and I will attempt to determine what advantages as well as disadvantages result from accepting it as a precursor to the rest of a theory of identification. Explicit cases are easy for us to understand as cases of identification, but it is possible that such cases are only a small part of the instances of identification that any worthwhile theory of identification must cover.

After examining the strengths and weaknesses of the narrow description I will suppose that identification can be implicit and investigate the results of that

⁹⁴ Kupperman, "Character and Self-Knowledge" 231.

claim. This will be called the broad description of identification. I will take a close look at its implications for my hypothesis that identification must be an authoritative, active, and purposive involvement of the self and as such accessible to mind. Finally, I will argue that bringing about an identification, as well as maintaining one, is best understood under the broad description properly drawn. This version of the broad description includes explicit identification but adds to it cases of identification which would become explicit should the appropriate circumstances arise. In this way it includes implicit identification as being akin to our implicit concern for our physical health. Most of the time we do not worry over our health; we tend to take it for granted. But should something exceptional occur, such as an injury, disease, or perhaps the remarks of a physician, we can quickly bring our health, or some aspect of it, into explicit psychic focus. Many of our identifications can be understood in a similar fashion. Implicit identifications are made explicit only by exception, but that does not imply that, should nothing exceptional occur, they are any less identifications.

The Narrow Description

The narrow description of identification requires that an identification must be explicit before it counts as an identification. Jane's explicit self-mobilization against her timid disposition counts as a case of identification under the narrow description, but Mary's politeness before starting college does not. Under the narrow description, high-school Mary's politeness would be no more than a disposition.

There are at least two good reasons for placing a requirement of explicitness on identification. The first is at the level of the phenomenon itself; the

second is at the level of theoretical elegance. I will consider these advantages in order, as well as what the narrowness costs us.

First, it seems congenial to our intuitive understanding that resounding commitments on our part should be explicit to us even if nothing else ever is. The paradigm cases of identification in the FD model are explicit. It is the unwilling addict's explicit, albeit futile, resistance to his disposition that enables us to say that he is unwilling in the first place. In fact, it is unlikely that we could make sense out of the notion of an unwilling addict unless there was something quite obvious to us about the unwillingness. And requiring identification to be explicit seems to make it fit nicely with people's own accounts of identification as a key to self-determination. If we were to ask people about instances of self-determination in their personal histories, it seems likely that they would respond with a list of explicit instances. Many, for example, might point to particular moments such as the one when they resolved to quit smoking, or to become more courageous, as "defining moments" in their biographies. If Jane is successful in her attempt to determine herself to be a less timid person, it seems likely that she could point to some event which she views as pivotal for her character.⁹⁵ Perhaps she let down a cause or individual, with substantial negative results, because her timid disposition, as we revealingly say, got the better of her. After that she resolved to become less timid. "Never again," she might have said in self-rebuke, "will I disgrace myself or my cause by my timidity!" More, if the psychic point of the identification is in clear view, this understanding of the identification's point may help propel us toward an

⁹⁵ Interestingly, if Jane is unsuccessful in determining herself to be more courageous, it seems unlikely that she would point to a defining moment when she identified with courage.

actual change in behavior. This might help explain how, for example, the familiar New Year's resolution is more than mere talk--it has a conative aspect that can be explained in terms of dissatisfaction with the historical self.⁹⁶

Second, it seems that restricting cases of identification to explicit instances yields a pleasantly clean theoretical result. As it demands that we make our authorship of the self clear to the self, it seems a good way to distinguish identifying from otherwise similar mental phenomena. If one were to suggest that identification need not be explicit, then the dividing line between identification and dispositions would seem ill-defined at best.

But we may be misled by this seeming advantage of the narrow account. It is possible that this explicitness may not be a feature of identification itself but rather a feature of *easily recognized* identifications. The explicit is intrinsically more susceptible to notice than the implicit, and it would be a mistake to let this feature of our noticing be mistaken for a feature of what is noticed.

This possibility is difficult to explore, for in any sufficiently clear exploration of an implicit identification, the implicit phenomenon is made explicit. Pointing out an instance of implicit identification works to destroy its implicitness. But to move from this feature of the investigation to the claim that there is no such

⁹⁶ It is worth remarking that in cases of self-rebuke we often seem to view the offending disposition as somehow external to the self. Evidently, as Terence Penelhum has noted, this "externality device" is most often used "to disclaim full responsibility for lapses, and to express resolution to be free in the future of the passion which has led to them." Oddly, if we do indeed mean both things when we assert that something "Wasn't me" or "My anger got the better of me," we have left ourselves in the curious position of disavowing responsibility for something yet saying that we intend to do something about it in the future. See Penelhum, "Human Nature and External Desires," *Monist* 62 (1979): 311.

thing as an implicit identification would be a mistake akin to claiming there is nothing invisible because we have never seen anything invisible. While we cannot establish the existence of implicit identification through this argument,⁹⁷ we can at least make ourselves aware that difficulty in finding implicit identification does not tell against it as powerfully as we might at first be inclined to think.

Think back for a moment to Kupperman's example of the woman who had made up her mind to move to Boston but who had never made the decision explicit to herself until certain circumstances brought her decision to the cognitive surface. Something similar could plausibly go on in identification. One way of showing this would be to show that Mary would have acknowledged her identification earlier if she had entered unrefined surroundings earlier than she did.

We have proposed that Mary has identified with her politeness gradually and implicitly, and we wish to determine whether this is in fact the case. That is, we want to know whether she merely has a polite disposition, which "grew on her" gradually, or a disposition with which she identified well before the identification became explicit. This is in apparent contrast to Jane, who has explicitly identified with moral courage and against her timid disposition. But if we move more deeply into the two examples, it may be that there is less contrast than we at first suspected.

If it is true that explicitness is required for picking out identification but not for performing it, then it is also true that Jane's explicit identification may have started psychic life implicitly. That Jane consciously identifies against her timidity

⁹⁷ Though I can point to them, I am unable to find any way of proving the existence of implicit identifications. The only path to that goal is via individual introspection, for any publically described identification is not implicit.

at present does not mean that she always did. That is, her identification may, at some point in the past, have been just as implicit as high-school Mary's identification with her politeness. This identification was not obvious to Jane in the past--she simply began to nurture a disapproval of timidity and an approval of courage by inches. Now that the identification is explicit to her, if she considers things carefully she may be able to see that it was made well before she explicated it to herself (though, of course, as in the case of the woman who decided to move, it may not be possible for her to say exactly when she made the decision).⁹⁸ Her identification against her excessive timidity may have existed before she became conscious of it, and it would disrespect the facts to suggest that it is only at the moment of the realization of such an identification that the identification takes place. In this way, identification may often occur as a sequence of minute psychic steps akin to the minute steering adjustments we make while driving in order to remain in the proper lane. Kupperman has suggested that this is so with choices in general. "Many of the most crucial 'choices' in our lives turn out to be clusters of an indeterminate number of choices, most or all of which point in the same direction, which are such that many are not reflective or explicit."⁹⁹

Some of us may be able to come to all our identifications explicitly and quickly, but this is not true for everyone. Though it may be appropriate in some instances to characterize identification in terms of throwing a psychic switch, it seems more complete to think of it as a kind of process. Just as we might say that

⁹⁸ Donald Davidson notes that something similar is true of coming to have an intention "so slowly or unnoticed that the agent cannot say when it happens." *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 89.

⁹⁹ Kupperman, *Character* 70.

the progress of an infection is such that it inches its way toward the point at which symptoms become evident, so it may be with an identification inching its way toward explicitness. The process could easily be well under way before becoming explicit; indeed, it may never become explicit unless something happens to bring it to mind. More, the exact moment that it does come to mind could be a product of many different influences. It is easily conceivable that Jane would have made her identification against timidity explicit earlier had the right cognitive circumstances come about to elicit her recognition. And if Mary had stayed at home for another year before leaving for college, the identification may have remained implicit for that additional year. In this respect, for both Jane and Mary, the moment of making an identification is variable in a way that the identification itself is not. It would be a mistake to think that an identification's coming into being depends upon its being made explicit, just as it would be a mistake to say that a person does not have a disease until she is diagnosed as having it.

The same seems to be true for our ceasing to identify. It seems accurate to say that one could cease to identify with some disposition without making the exact moment of the cessation obvious to the self. It seems more likely that an identification would fade away than come to a screeching halt. But it would seem wrong to say that one did not stop identifying until one realized that she no longer identified with some aspect of her psyche.

The gradual development of her identification is part of the reason why Mary overlooked it until her arrival at the portals of higher education. Let us recall the scenario as Mary's case illustrates it. A polite disposition began to take root in Mary early in life. As she developed psychologically, she became involved with her growing polite disposition, by working on occasion, however implicitly, at being a

polite person. She continued being polite, for the most part effortlessly, through her high-school years. It was not until she moved into the relatively crude environment of a freshman dorm that she thought about politeness in any explicit way. Now that she is in college, she explicitly identifies with politeness, continuing to keep herself a polite person, and being gratified that she does.

If this general picture of the development of some identifications is roughly correct, it seems artificial to say that Mary's bringing her politeness explicitly into consciousness is necessary for her identification; it was within psychic view for years before--but had never previously been an object of psychic focus. As with the woman's decision to move to Boston, it is accurate to say that the decision became explicit when the conversation occurred, it is accurate to say that Mary's identification became explicit soon after her first exposure to dorm life. It is, however, a mistake to infer from a decision or an identification's becoming explicit that it had not preexisted the moment it became explicit.¹⁰⁰

Likewise, how we remember our turning points may not reflect our actual identifications. While this certainly may vary between individuals, I think most would, after thinking about it, admit that the "turning point" was nothing more than a symptom of a more subtle but general process of identification. It seems that

¹⁰⁰ There are some similarities between my claims for this process of identifying and Donald Davidson's sketch of practical reasoning.

"We cannot suppose that whenever an agent acts intentionally he goes through a process of deliberation or reasoning, marshals evidence and principles, and draws conclusions. Nevertheless, if someone acts with an intention, he must have attitudes and beliefs from which, had he been aware of them and had the time, he *could* have reasoned that his action was desirable (or had some other positive attribute)." Davidson, *Essays* 85.

any number of circumstances might have come about to elicit the explication of the identification. That we tend to compress long developmental processes into turning points is more a fact about our biographies than about our lives, and doing so here would ultimately be more distracting than enlightening. Making an identification explicit is no more a necessary condition of that identification than a diagnosis of a disease is a condition of suffering from that disease. My previous example of a person quitting smoking deserves another look in this regard. The proud quitter may want to say "I quit at midnight on December 31st, 1994!" but it would be better to describe her as having quit over a few weeks in December and January.¹⁰¹ Most of the time it takes a while to turn over a new leaf.

¹⁰¹ Kupperman suggests that we have understandable psychic motives for conflating a series of small choices into one defining moment.

"We would like to see our lives in terms of discrete choices, usually not occurring all too frequently; the periods in between these can seem a free-play zone in which we are just living and not choosing. Why is this picture so seductive? There are intellectual reasons: The picture is simple, and, if we cling to it, choice can seem easy to describe. The major appeal, though, is that a life of continuous choice can seem and feel much more strenuous than the one which this picture tries to convince us we have. Only a puritan like Jean-Paul Sartre could find an image of continuous choice, with a corollary of continuous responsibility, positively appealing. Nevertheless, commitments often *do* involve continuous choice. . . . any of these choices become quite predictable once an initial choice, which may be explicit, has been made. But, all the same, inexplicit, unreflective choices--many of which flow from commitments--are a continuing feature of human life." *Character* 70.

There is another difficulty with requiring that identification must be explicit. It is common to think of identifications as changes in our psyches, but it seems that many identifications might better be understood in terms of maintaining a certain psychic status. Yet, if identification must be explicit, then it seems that much of what we identify with must be present to mind simultaneously. As this

The other advantage of the narrow account, that of crispness and cleanliness at the theoretical level, is far more philosophically seductive and may ultimately prove compelling for some. This is because the line between a disposition and an identification seems to become in many instances quite thin if identifications can be implicit, requiring further fine distinctions between dispositions and implicit identification.

Recall that I argued in Chapter III that we may misconstrue our dispositions. Here I want to maintain that identifications are accessible to mind in a way that these dispositions may not be. As such, there is a nice methodological dividend in requiring identification to be explicit. It would seem to set identification off nicely from dispositions because it is uncontroversial that a disposition can survive unnoticed. If it were true that identifications had to be explicit, then we would have a handy way of dividing off one class from the other. Since at least some identifications are explicit, and these are easy to recognize, it seems an obvious step to require all identifications to be explicit, and then to classify young Mary's politeness as a disposition.

I am unpersuaded that this strength of the narrow account is enough to justify favoring it over a broad account. The theoretical simplicity of the narrow account comes at a prohibitively high cost: it excludes many, perhaps most, cases of identification. It is of course not unusual for philosophers to have to live with compromises between clarity and truth, but it may be possible to avoid such a stark dilemma. It may be that there is an accurate, if somewhat more subtle, distinction

seems impossible, we might want to say that those psychic elements that we do not have present to mind cannot be identified with, but that seems to exclude Mary's politeness prior to entering college.

between implicit identification and dispositions. Drawing such a distinction with adequate clarity will be one of the tasks of the broad account.

The Broad Description

The broad description of identification encompasses both explicit and implicit identification. That is, it encompasses cases such as Jane's consciously identifying against her timidity but in addition it includes Mary's inching her way toward identifying with politeness. More, it includes the tacit maintenance of identifications that are not present to mind. While not requiring that identifications be made explicitly, it requires that Mary would acknowledge her identification as a polite person were the question of her identification to come to consciousness. More generally, it does not demand that identification be explicit, but it does require that there be no barriers to an identification's becoming explicit. It permits there to be something special about the flush of recognition attendant to making a heretofore implicit identification explicit, but it does not insist on this moment as critical to the phenomenon of identification; the flush of recognition is only a symptom of identification, it is not constitutive of identification. It may help to think of identifications as in this way analogous to friendship. One can have a friendship without ever acknowledging it, but one cannot acknowledge one's friendship without first living it. The acknowledgment is made possible by first being and having a friend, but it is not the same as being and having a friend. Most of us enjoy more friendships than we make explicit, though we would acknowledge each friendship were someone to point it out. Likewise, it is possible to maintain many identifications while only a few ever become explicit.

The broad description's inclusiveness lets it meet all the cases of identification in our lives, including those of ongoing tacit identification. This is a

significant strength of the broad account. It grants that even though some identifications are explicit, not every identification can be an ongoing subject of conscious reflection. It consequently seems complete in a way that the narrow account does not. Indeed, if it is true that many cases of identification begin as implicit identifications, then one clear advantage of the broad description is that it at least does not throw out the baby with the bath water as the narrow description seems to. But while such a broad description of identification has the welcome feature of including cases like high-school Mary's politeness, it has at least two serious weaknesses. First, it requires some further account of the distinction between an implicit identification and a disposition. Second, and related, it raises a complication for my claim that identification is a kind of active and authoritative involvement with or participation in some part of our psyches. It seems that the notion of active and authoritative involvement demands explicitness, for otherwise one would have no clear idea of what one was involved with.

The broad description can be crafted in such a way as to avoid these two vulnerabilities. This will, however, require that we understand the involvement or participation necessary for identification to be less than fully reflective. This is not to say that the participation is capricious or uncertain. Indeed, the participation is purposive. But it is to say that the participation need not be explicitly conscious.

Another example of Kupperman's might help clarify this sense of participation. Although he was writing in the context of choices we make voluntarily but without explicit reflection, his example is useful here. He describes the case of Bloggs who is driving along

"looking at the road but thinking of something else. An animal appears in front of the car, and Bloggs immediately 'without thinking' swerves so as to

miss it. . . . [N]ot only did Bloggs not explicitly consider an alternative to his action, he did not even explicitly consider his action."¹⁰²

Bloggs's swerving did not come explicitly into consciousness, but it was purposive. If we return to considerations of identification, we can think of cases in which we involve ourselves in our psyches in much the same way. Happily married persons might almost automatically alter their thoughts quickly away from considerations of extramarital sexual encounters in much the way Bloggs swerved his car to avoid the animal. Someone feeling himself beginning to panic might be quick to bring himself back under control. Jane might sense her timidity welling up and counter it by a sudden psychic involvement against her timidity, and Bob might close a mental door on the counsels of his second-order Puritanism. All of these examples exhibit the sort of purposive, active, and authoritative involvement of the self that characterizes identification, yet none of them are cases of explicit identification. Howard Kamler makes the point cogently.

When a person chooses for or against a trait [he already possesses,] . . . he sometimes makes such full reflective choices. These are the clearest cases of character-building. However, in fact, these are quite the rare events. When most of us think back over our lives, we just don't recall all that many moments when we so fully chose our character traits. Reflective character choosing is seldom the pure dramatic and fully conscious event. Very few reflective character choices are experienced by us as reasoned, drawn-out affairs of great importance. Nevertheless, we all have made reflective character choices, great numbers of them. Even though many of these choices might not stand out in consciousness--that is, even though they were not *fully* reflective--we know them as occasions of a person's acting *on purpose*. That's enough to constitute "reflectiveness."¹⁰³

¹⁰² Kupperman, *Character* 67-68.

¹⁰³ Howard Kamler, *Identification and Character* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) 143.

Though we may want to question whether doing something on purpose is sufficient to make that act reflective, Kamler's point is nevertheless well taken. While it would be straining things a bit to say that Bloggs, Jane, Bob or the others "reflected" (as we ordinarily understand the term) about their acts, it does seem that they did them actively, authoritatively, and purposively. More, just as Bloggs can acknowledge that he swerved after the fact, even though he did not make the swerving a conscious choice, so the others in our examples can acknowledge that they took mental steps respecting some disposition.

Identifications may start as small, implicit mental involvements and can also be sustained as such. We might imagine ourselves as conducting a sort of psychic monitoring of our identifications. It is just this psychic monitoring that allows us to say that identifications are accessible to mind in a way that dispositions may not be. Working telephones do the sort of monitoring I have in mind. When nobody is calling, the phone does not ring. But should someone dial the right number, the phone announces the incoming call. Likewise, though we may not be speaking with anyone at the moment, many of our acquaintances are accessible to us if we merely pick up the telephone. This is akin to the accessibility of our identifications. Though we can be ignorant of or misconstrue a disposition, an identification is always accessible to us whether or not it is accessed. We are ready to acknowledge our identifications, regardless of whether we actually do make them explicit. If we include this sort of involvement or participation in the working hypothesis for what it means to identify, we are able to save a distinction between implicit identification and dispositions without having to make the radical exclusionary moves that the narrow description demands. If this monitoring is conceived as a sort of mental

activity, perhaps similar to the way that listening can be active, then we can understand how the broad description includes identification as a sort of activity.

Recall the previous suggestion that many of our identifications are like good, unremarkable neighbors. We are vaguely aware of them as members of good standing in the community, but ordinarily they are not occupying any of our consciousness. What I want to show here, though, is that they would occupy a part of our consciousness were they to become in some way exceptional. That is, they would come to our attention if something unusual happened to bring them to our attention. The clearest example of bringing our relationship with the neighbors into focus would be the event of something threatening them. Similarly, as I will argue later, a crucial test for identification involves a disposition's being in some way threatened. In other words, we would fight to keep any disposition with which we identified should it be threatened. We cannot say this for dispositions which have no identification whatsoever, and in the case of dispositions against which we identify we would be glad to see them threatened. But it is not necessary for an identification to be threatened in order to become exceptional: a simple query would do the trick. If, sometime during the summer prior to her freshman year, Mary had been asked whether she liked her politeness and wanted to keep it as a part of her character, she would have acknowledged that she did. Just as the phone will ring if the right number were dialed, so we would acknowledge an identification if someone were to inquire over it.

It seems, then, that what is required for an identification is that it be capable of being readily brought to mind, not that it have been brought to mind. Consider a counterfactual test for this, which we might call the preexistence

counterfactual: Would, *ceteris paribus*, a person acknowledge some preexisting identification if that identification were brought to her attention?

The most clear cases satisfying the preexistence counterfactual seem to be those in which an identification is currently explicit, but which would have been explicit earlier had the circumstances drawing attention to the identification come about sooner than they did. Even though she may not have made her politeness explicit to herself, high school Mary would, if it had been pointed out to her, have acknowledged it as something she identified with. For example, Mary could have spent a few days visiting her college the spring prior to her entering as a student. She would have encountered the coarse environment during her visit, and consequently made her identification explicit to herself at that time.

But we should be careful not to conceive of the counterfactual too narrowly; it applies to more than cases of identifications which have been made explicit. For example, if we change the example such that Mary never encounters the college environment, it still seems that she *would* have acknowledged her identification *if* it had been brought to her attention during her high school years. That it is in fact never made explicit to Mary does nothing to undermine the identification itself.

The narrow description's requirement that identification be explicit is too restrictive, for there may be many different causal stories behind an identification's coming to consciousness that are extraneous to the identification itself. For example, the identification may be made explicit by a change in environment, through conversation with an especially perceptive friend, by self-examination, through psychotherapy, and so on. Any of these may be sufficient conditions for making an identification explicit, but none of them are necessary for the

identification itself. It is important not to mistake the recognition of an identification for the identification itself. Looked at another way, conditions required to make an identification explicit are too varied to suffice as an accurate test for identification. To suggest, then, that explicitness is a necessary condition for identification seems to let the tail wag the dog. It is a necessary condition of an identification that it would be acknowledged, but it is not, on that account, a necessary condition of identification that it be explicit--rather it need only be readily made explicit.¹⁰⁴

This helps illuminate what is meant by saying that an identification is accessible to mind in a way that a disposition may not be. While we may have dispositions and be ignorant of them, this cannot be true for an identification if it is to be the act of "putting oneself behind" or at least implicitly standing behind some other aspect of the self in much the same way a proud craftsman stands behind his work. Individuals who have identified in some way know it in much the same way that an author knows her own books. Our knowledge of our identifications is accessible--though we do not always access it--more directly than our knowledge

¹⁰⁴ There is a use of the term "disposition" that I want to be sure to steer clear of. Sometimes we use "disposition" to refer to a high probability of an act's being performed should certain circumstances arise. For example, my five year old daughter might be said to have a disposition to eat ice-cream, and we could test for this disposition using the preexistence counterfactual. She would eat ice cream if the appropriate circumstances presented themselves.

Indeed, this use of disposition would let us say that a person has identified if she is disposed to acknowledge that identification should the appropriate circumstances come about. This would all be grammatically and technically correct, but I resist using that terminology here because of the awkwardness of calling an identification regarding dispositions a disposition (in a different sense) itself.

of our dispositions. It is a seemingly distinctive feature of identifications that it is impossible to deceive ourselves about them. We can deceive others about them, but even that very deception demands that we have access to them in a way that others do not. As I pointed out in Chapter III, we may engage in an identification only because of certain mistaken beliefs, but discovering that the beliefs were mistaken would not lead us to say that we had deceived ourselves over whether we had made the identification.¹⁰⁵

Identification Further Characterized

Identifications are instances of self-authorship, and we take an interest in maintaining them. This fact lets us draw another important distinction between identifications and dispositions. To identify with something is to say that that thing is worth fighting for, but we do not always believe this about our dispositions. Put another way, though there are dispositions which we would not defend should they be threatened, or even which we may fight against, there are no dispositions with which we identify which we would not defend should they become threatened. This is another way of putting the claim that if something is an identification then we are authoritatively involved with it. Identifying is in this way like making a commitment; it is a way of acknowledging that something is worth fighting for. This sheds more light on the purposiveness of identification. Whether or not identifications actually serve some psychic point is not of any great import to understanding the phenomenon of identification itself. Just as the point of Bloggs's

¹⁰⁵ Donald Davidson makes a similar point, noting that even bad, or false reasons can still function as explanatory reasons behind an intention. See *Essays* 83-84.

swerve may be said to be to spare the animal's life whether or not it actually does spare the life, so the point, say, of Jane's identification against her timidity might be said to assist her psychic integration, whether or not it actually does. It is the readiness to defend that may be taken as a sign of an identification's having been in place. More, this readiness may be unspoken. It often takes a threat to make explicit that something is worth defending.¹⁰⁶ We would work to maintain the class of such things in a way that we would not fight to keep just any disposition. This fact lets us maintain a viable distinction between identifications and dispositions, even higher-order dispositions, while respecting the fact that not every identification is as explicit as Jane's identification against her timidity.

This distinction comes into play when we cease to identify with a weakening disposition. We let the aspect identified with slip away where we would not have done so were it still something with which we identified.

Ceasing to identify with some disposition, even if one regrets having made the identification in the first place, does nothing to suggest that the historical identification was any less genuinely an identification. A previous identification is in this respect similar to an old love. Edna St. Vincent Millay puts it nicely:

After all, my erstwhile dear,
My no longer cherished,
Need we say it was not love,
Just because it perished?¹⁰⁷

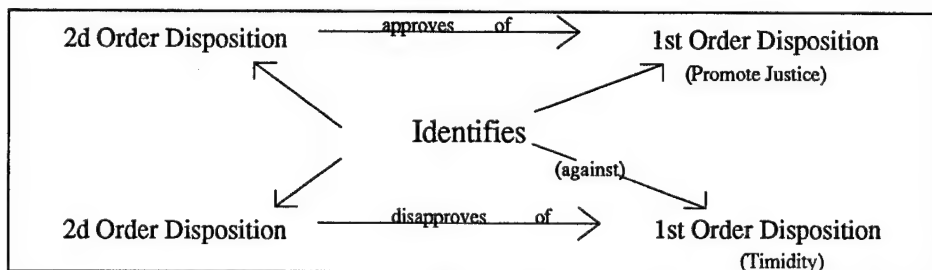
¹⁰⁶ I am grateful to Professor Jim Nickel for bringing this to my attention.

¹⁰⁷ Edna St. Vincent Millay, "Passer Mortus Est," in her collection "Second April." *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1959) 57. I am grateful to Prof. Claudia Mills for bringing this poem to my attention.

Just as a now extinguished love was still genuine before it died, so is an extinguished identification. Whether one regrets the previous identification or not, it was still a bona fide identification.

Identification and Moral Emotions

Though identification need not be moral in nature, identification that regards moral virtues is of special interest. Let us return to the case of Jane and her timidity to take a more detailed look at one description of her identifications as previously sketched in Chapter III and which is reproduced here for convenience. Jane has a first-order disposition to value justice. She has a second-order disposition that approves of this first-order disposition, and she identifies with both of these dispositions. She also has a first-order disposition to be timid and a second-order disposition which disapproves of her timidity. She identifies with this second-order disposition.



(Figure Three)

We can use this case to show that Jane's feeling self-regarding moral emotions constitutes evidence of her having made some identification. Put another way, we can use it to explain how identification is a prerequisite for experiencing self-regarding moral emotions.

Before proceeding it is important to make a few distinctions clearly.¹⁰⁸ Frankfurt seems to conflate at least certain sorts of identification into caring, and I should be clear that I think identification is importantly different from caring. For Frankfurt, a "person who cares about something. . . . *identifies* himself with what he cares about in the sense that he makes himself vulnerable to losses and susceptible to benefits depending upon whether what he cares about is diminished or enhanced."¹⁰⁹ This is correct as long as we make clear that one can care about something without identifying with it in the sense that is of interest. That is, one can be vulnerable to losses because one cares regardless of whether one identifies with what is cared for. For example, Jane undoubtedly cares about preparing her income taxes accurately, or perhaps even for a cigarette, and it is true that she is therefore vulnerable in some sense. Nonetheless, it seems unlikely that she identifies with either.

Likewise, Jane's disposition to promote justice means that she cares for justice. But caring for and being favorably disposed toward something are not the same as identifying. Caring for justice is enough to ground Jane's feeling certain emotions on occasions when the cause of justice advances or is forced to retreat, but it is not enough to ground her feeling *self-regarding moral* emotions.¹¹⁰ Jane

¹⁰⁸ These distinctions are inspired by, but not identical to, certain distinctions Frankfurt makes in his essay "The Importance of What We Care About," *The Importance of What We Care About* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 80-94.

¹⁰⁹ Frankfurt, "The Importance" 83.

¹¹⁰ Self-regarding moral emotions do seem to me to form a distinct class of emotions. I include pride and guilt in this class, but I am not at present sure just how to analyze the class. They do seem to grip us in a distinct way, and it may that

will feel sad when justice suffers. And it is true that she could not feel sad for something unless she cared about it, but she would feel sad regardless of whether justice suffered because of her omissions or because of someone else's. On the other hand, Jane *cannot* feel *guilty* after having let down the cause of justice unless she identifies with her disposition to promote justice.¹¹¹ That Jane feels self-rebuke after having behaved timidly seems to constitute evidence of her having identified with a disposition not to want to want to be timid. Similarly, if Jane manages to exhibit moral courage under trying circumstances she may well be pleased because the cause of justice has advanced and she has a first-order disposition to desire justice. But she feels proud or pleased *with herself* because she identifies with her second-order approval of her first-order disposition to promote justice. To value, care for, or be disposed in some way toward something is, I think, sufficient to ground a moral emotion, but identification is necessary to ground a *self-regarding* moral emotion.

Higher-order dispositions and identifications can regard the same lower-order dispositions, as Figure Three indicates. This can lead to confusion. Jane possesses a second-order approval of her first-order disposition to promote justice and she identifies with both of those dispositions. But it is the identification which

we can account for their special force by reference to their self-regarding nature instead of their moral nature.

¹¹¹ I use the term *guilty*, as opposed to *ashamed*, for a reason. For my purposes, shame can be a social construct, but guilt cannot. It is, for example, possible to feel guilt in spite of a social context which supports one's behavior (as a vegetarian might feel guilty for allowing himself to eat a hamburger), while shame seems to depend upon the social context. (One may feel ashamed, but not guilty, for belching).

I claim is necessary to ground the self-regarding moral emotions, not the second-order disposition.

It may be responded that feeling self-regarding moral emotions does not so much indicate underlying identifications as second-order dispositions. This objection seems powerful because it seems that second-order dispositions are by nature self-regarding. Indeed, I have suggested above that Jane likes the fact that *she* is disposed to charity. Reflexivity seems obviously characteristic of higher-order dispositions, and so it seems proper to say that it is these self-regarding dispositions which ground self-regarding moral emotions.

This contention merits close thought, though it is ultimately misleading. Two more cases should help make this reasoning more clear.

It seems accurate to say that Jane possesses any number of second-order dispositions regarding aspects of her character. One of these regards her first-order disposition to avoid visits to the dentist. Jane has a second-order disposition which disapproves of this first-order disposition. But Jane does not identify with either of these dispositions. The reflexivity required to enable her to feel self-regarding moral emotions over her disapproval of her fear is not in place. Jane is aware of both dispositions, but does not commit *herself* to them. Both dispositions seem objectified, it is true, but there is nothing resounding about Jane's relationship to them. Quite the contrary, Jane regards the entire objectified package as a trivial annoyance. Though she certainly would not miss it if it were gone, it is, in sum, unimportant to Jane.

Now let's consider a case of a more obviously moral nature. Jane disapproves of her disposition to take pleasure in the ill fortunes of her colleagues. Her secret pleasure at the first-order is condemned at the second, but she does not

identify with either disposition. She simply acknowledges her pettiness as a fact of human nature or, perhaps, resigns herself to possession of the unwelcome first-order disposition. Her resignation is in a sense a clear decision *not* to identify against her ugly first-order disposition. It is not as if Jane thereby tacitly approves of her secret pleasure, but rather it is that the psychic cost of allying herself with her disapproval of her pettiness is too high to justify the alliance. Jane knows that perfection is a difficult goal to attain, and perhaps feels that human nature has its unsavory aspects, but she does not consider herself some sort of failure in her own eyes for having this human trait. In this case there is no ground for self-regarding moral emotions despite the apparently reflexive nature of second-order dispositions, for once again the second-order disposition fails to exert enough pull on Jane to be cause for concern in the face of the psychic effort required to oppose and perhaps diminish the unsavory first-order disposition. As with certain annoying idiosyncrasies of our friends or family members, some aspects of our psyches are more difficult to oppose than to tolerate.

Cases like these lead me to believe that two avenues bear investigation. The first involves inquiring after distinctions in how the objects of dispositions and identifications are regarded. It seems that a second-order disposition can regard a first-order disposition as a logically detachable part of Jane. That is, the object of a second-order disposition can be narrow in the sense that it does not include Jane. An identification, by contrast, must regard a disposition as an *aspect* of Jane's character and is more broad in its scope. That is, identifications must take the self into account while second-order dispositions may not. This is, of course, not surprising if we recall the strengths of the split-level account of the self. Identification can be informed by reason and as such can enjoy a breadth of

context that dispositions do not. If we think again of Jane's disapproval of her disposition to avoid visiting the dentist, we can see that the disapproval seems psychically local in contrast to Jane's identification with her disapproval of her timidity, which seems more encompassing. An identification is truly self-regarding whereas a second-order disposition may regard only a psychologically partitioned aspect of the self. For this reason Jane's disapproval of her disposition to take pleasure in her colleagues' misfortunes seems psychically compartmentalized while her identification with her disapproval of her timidity seems more psychically pervasive. This is one feature of dispositions that makes it possible for Jane to resign herself to them. It would make no sense to say that Jane is resigned to an identification, for resignation and identification take place in the same psychic context. It does, however, make sense to say that Jane is resigned to a disposition, for this is a way of distancing herself from a disposition without having to expend psychic effort in vain.

The second sort of distinction is closely related. It involves the obvious differences between how we understand the respective sources of all identifications and most dispositions.¹¹² Think again of Jane's timidity--she has her disposition whether she wants it or not, but she would say that she was not involved in its creation. She will likely attribute her timidity to her socialization into a particular gender-role. But she might just as easily attribute her second-order disapproval of her first-order disposition to socialization she received while attending college as well. There is nothing more authoritative about the second-order disapproval than

¹¹² I say most dispositions to exclude those which may have had found their source in our identifying with a possible disposition and thereby importing it.

there is about the first-order disposition. She might easily describe herself as feeling like the object of both of these socializing influences. When she identifies, however, she involves herself in the act as a subject doing the identifying. Even in cases of implicit identification, she authors herself when she identifies; it is as if she is willing to declare "This is me" and "I am this." It is her identification that conveys authority to her disapproval of her timidity. (And this would be even more obviously the case for someone like Bob, who identifies against his second-order disposition.) This is possible because Jane believes herself to exercise authority over her identifications creatively, while she views her dispositions more as psychic elements she possesses as "given." Higher-order dispositions are more like lower-order dispositions than they are like identifications. This helps us understand that while we may wish to deny or explain away certain of our dispositions of whatever order, we do not wish to do so for our identifications. Indeed, in contrast to many of our dispositions, we are willing to, and often do, publish our identifications, especially those regarding dispositions we'd rather not have.

Moral Constraints on Dispositions and Identification

Identifying with second-order dispositions which conflict with the first-order dispositions they regard makes life unpleasant. Jane would be happier if her dispositions were in perfect harmony with her values. This seems especially true, at least for some people like Jane, of moral dispositions and values, which are the focus of our investigation into identification. Cognitive dissonance is aversive, and as a consequence those suffering from it tend to search for a way to eliminate it.¹¹³

¹¹³ Lawrence Kohlberg has argued that such cognitive dissonance spurs us to increase our capability for moral reasoning, and as such is an invaluable tool for

Thus far we have considered Jane's using identification as a means to determining herself to accord with her disposition to promote justice. But why does Jane take the hard way out of her disharmony? It seems that if it is simply cognitive dissonance that bothers her, the simplest and quickest solution would be to jettison her troublesome disposition to promote justice. Or she could at least decide not to identify with her first- and second-order dispositions respecting promoting justice.

Such avenues to integration do not seem open to Jane. Trying to decide not to value justice might be like trying to stop valuing someone who is loved. Justice has, at least for Jane and many like her, a certain magnetism that it is impossible for her to ignore.¹¹⁴ The attraction may not be strong enough to determine her behavior or her dispositions, but regardless of whether reason dictates respect for justice, it is not something that she can help feeling. Indeed, her feeling sad when injustice prevails does not seem to be something that she can control (though she may be able to control whether she makes herself aware of the fate of justice). More, it seems plausible that justice's magnetism influences Jane's identification with her disposition to promote justice. While it seems logically possible for Jane to identify with her timidity and against her dispositions to favor justice, it is not, as a practical matter, an option that is open to Jane. Jane can no more identify with her timidity than she can make herself believe that the sun rises

motivating students. Lawrence Kohlberg, "Moral Development: A Modern Statement of the Platonic View," *Issues in Moral Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Donaldson (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1986) 44.

¹¹⁴ I do not wish to discount the possibility that a person could corrupt himself into moral nihilism; I do, however, for purposes of illustration, want to say that such corruption is impossible for Jane.

in the west.¹¹⁵ And, having identified with her disposition to promote justice, she is unable to prevent being dissatisfied with herself when she allows her timidity to confound the demands of justice. Given Jane's dispositions and identifications, failure to embody the virtue of moral courage entails guilt.

If we couple this phenomenon of moral constraints on identification to the suggestion that identification regarding moral character seems to ground self-regarding moral emotions, we have reason to suspect that identification respecting aspects of moral character is intertwined with moral motivation. Though I do not pretend to understand how this force operates, I do think that it is appropriate to consider some proposals very briefly. To that end, I want to mention both Kant's conception of the reverence he argues we feel for the moral law and Samuel Scheffler's structural account of moral motivation. I am not interested in defending either, but I am interested in them because they are examples of how moral motivation may play a role in identification respecting moral character.

Kant, it will be recalled, developed a general classification of acts according to their motivating force. He famously argued that strictly moral acts are those motivated in their entirety from a good will, "for the sake of duty alone."

¹¹⁵ I am put in mind of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*--in particular, the famous scene in which Huck must decide whether to comply with the socially inculcated belief that if he assists the flight of his companion, the runaway slave Jim, then he will suffer eternal damnation. Balancing this genuinely held belief is his contrasting respect and affection for Jim as a human being. Huck is unable to pray for reform--that is, for reform to the standards of his society and religion, which held that his assisting a runaway was sinful. Huck concludes, after a considerable soul-searching, "All right, then, I'll go to hell." Samuel Langhorne Clemens, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, ed. Sculley Bradley, Richard Beatty, E. H. Long and Thomas Cooley, 2nd. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977) 167-69.

The question of whether Kant is correct regarding the nature of morality is beyond my scope, but the idea behind the claim is central to my interest in moral self-determination. Indeed, if moral motivation is a distinct kind of motivation then we may, as Samuel Scheffler has argued, have a tool to explain the peculiar resonance of self-regarding moral emotions.

At the phenomenological level at least, moral motivation does seem to have certain features that distinguish it from other sorts of motivation. In particular, it seems distinct from those motivations that can comfortably be reduced by standard naturalistic accounts to psychic elements such as desire or aversion.¹¹⁶ Moral motives seem quite often to conflict with our desires or to urge us to certain actions in spite of their being otherwise aversive. More, when we think of characters that we admire or wish to emulate, we do not represent such characters to ourselves as being motivated exclusively naturalistically. Our notion of moral motivation is *moral* in nature *because* it is not reducible to other psychological explanations. As Scheffler points out, if Kant is correct about the nature of moral motivation, then the standard naturalistic accounts deny that there is such thing.¹¹⁷ But Scheffler does not suggest that we abandon naturalistic accounts. Rather, he argues that we may be able to handle Kant's objection to naturalistic accounts'

¹¹⁶ Scheffler characterizes a standard naturalistic account of moral motivation as one which asserts that "our motivations for behaving morally stem ultimately from our natural attitudes, desires, sentiments, or inclinations, or from other features of our psychology." Samuel Scheffler, *Human Morality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 61. The best known naturalistic account is probably Hume's, where moral motivations are reduced to the sentiment of sympathy.

¹¹⁷ Scheffler 64.

inadequacy if we are willing to consider non-reductionist naturalistic accounts. In other words, it is not the naturalism of the accounts that is problematic, but rather their psychological superficiality.

Scheffler suggests that we consider psychoanalytic theory's conception of the emergence of the superego in the developing child and its continuing presence as a psychic force throughout the individual's life. The relevant aspect of the account is its claim that the child develops a psychological structure which acts like an external sanctioning force. That is, the superego can issue fearful prohibitions, just as the parents can. This results in emotions, including love for the parents, which were once directed at the parents being instead directed intrapsychically--toward the superego. Similarly, the hostility that was once directed exclusively toward the parents can be directed internally, toward the ego, resulting in the experience of guilt. The child desires to please the superego just as the young child wishes to please his parents.¹¹⁸

This is not the place for an in-depth discussion of moral motivation, but having some plausible account of it on hand serves the purpose of showing how we might explain moral motivation. Using Scheffler, we have a way of explaining why Jane is so strongly attracted to identify with her disposition to promote justice. The answer lies in the structure of her psyche. As we shall see in the next chapter, one of the methods by which character development can be fostered involves eliciting the same sort of moral motivation that Jane feels.

I cannot do justice to Scheffler's account here; all I can hope to do is to convey its gist. But regardless of how moral concerns are ultimately motivating,

¹¹⁸ Scheffler 80-81.

what is important for our purposes is that we do experience motivating forces which seem to explain Jane's practical inability to reject her disposition to promote justice despite the discomfort that she would avoid if she were to cast that disposition, or even her identification with it, away.

Our Authority Over Identification

I want to maintain that Jane's identification is under her authority in a way that her dispositions are not. Yet that it is, as a psychic matter of fact, practically impossible for Jane to identify against justice seems to confound my claim. This conundrum may at first seem insoluble, but we can make sense of identification's being under a person's authority even if specific identifications seem so inevitable as to be confidently predictable. Indeed, when we speak of someone as having an admirable character it is not because we think her choices to be determined mechanistically by some external force, but because we believe that she can be relied upon to choose well in the face of options to make poor choices. Kupperman has compared this conception of character to lines engraved on a tablet.

When a surface with lines cut in it comes into contact with material outside of itself (e.g., sand or water), this material will tend to follow the paths engraved into the surface, although this may be a likelihood and not a certainty. In a comparable way someone's character may be the engraving of ways of thinking and acting which have become predictable but which do not preclude a person's acting out of character.¹¹⁹

Erecting a plausible defense for predictable yet authoritative choosing is not only important for an account of identification, it also helps resolve some of the

¹¹⁹ Kupperman, *Character* 4.

apparent tension existing between fostering certain sorts of identification in others while maintaining that those identifications are *their own*.

Choices are an unavoidable part of living. Because certain choices seem more attractive than others does not mean that we are unfree to choose against them, though as a practical matter we may always choose the most attractive. That a choice is easy to make does not entail that it is not a choice at all. Just as my child is making a choice between the ice cream and the asparagus I offer her, so Jane is choosing between courage and timidity even though we may have been able to predict both her choice and my daughter's. Though I have no wish to defend metaphysical libertarianism or compatibilism, I believe that I can maintain that identifications are under our authority in a way that dispositions are not without philosophical hubris. While it is impossible for at least some of us to avoid being disposed to promote certain goods (not to mention certain people whom we love), I still want to say that our identifying is under our authority in a way that dispositions are not. Indeed, this is central to identification as a psychic notion, even if it cannot be shown to be true of identification ontologically. Jane cannot not care for justice, but she does have authority over whether she identifies with that caring. Jane wants to care for what she has no choice about caring for.

We find ourselves possessing dispositions, but we authoritatively create and maintain our identifications. That factors influence our creation does not make them any less ours, any more than my daughter's preferring ice cream to asparagus makes her choice to eat the former not hers. In both cases we *feel* that we are choosing and we view ourselves accordingly. Indeed, even if we could prove that such a feeling were merely another element in a closely determined universe, that would make no difference to identification's being a distinct *psychic* kind.

Summary and Limits of the Sketch

I have tried to offer a rough characterization of identification as a distinct psychic kind. Its characteristics are similar to those of commitments in general. Identification is purposive, authoritative, and accessible to mind even though it may not be explicit. I have suggested further that one sign of having identified is having self-regarding moral emotions.

It must be kept in mind that our capacity for self-determination must be understood as a modest capacity. We can determine ourselves, that is, but only within limits. The identifying self has no direct control over the dispositions. It exercises self-determination through identification and the practical methods mentioned earlier. The diminution of certain dispositions and the growth of others seems to be affected by our identifications, but that is not the same as saying that we are in control of them. Identification is an important part of self-determination, but it is certainly not the whole story of self-determination. Doing the best we can is the best we can do.

CHAPTER V

IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Now if arguments were in themselves enough to make men good, they would justly, as Theognis says, have won very great rewards, and such rewards should have been provided; but as things are, while they seem to have power to encourage and stimulate the generous-minded among our youth, and to make a character which is gently born, and a true lover of what is noble, ready to be possessed by virtue, they are not able to encourage the many to nobility and goodness. For these do not by nature obey the sense of shame, but only fear, and do not abstain from bad acts because of their baseness but through fear of punishment; living by passion they pursue their own pleasures and the means to them, and avoid the opposite pains, and have not even a conception of what is noble and truly pleasant, since they have never tasted it. What argument would remould such people? It is hard, if not impossible, to remove by argument the traits that have long since been incorporated in the character; and perhaps we must be content if, when all the influences by which we are thought to become good are present, we get some tincture of virtue.¹²⁰

As will become evident, I think Aristotle is in general correct.

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of practical efforts to bring about a "tincture of virtue" in the light of what has been said about identification. Accordingly, this chapter is focused on moral education in terms of fostering character development. Almost all of my own experience in the practice of character development has been as a faculty member at a military academy, and I have professional schools particularly in mind as I write. Still, much of the practical work should be relevant to parents who would foster decent character in their children, and even individuals who are interested in modifying their moral characters.

¹²⁰ Aristotle, 1108-09 (1179b4-19).

Though many practical concerns face those who would foster character development, I will concentrate primarily on only one. I want to make some headway in understanding how best to foster morally worthy identification at the specific level of institutional practice. While this rich sense of moral education may include elements of moral knowledge and proficiency in moral reasoning in the limited sense of academic skills, it requires more than teaching a certain competence. It requires some measure of moral motivation. Gilbert Ryle has characterized the nature of our inquiry nicely.

What, then, was the sort of teaching or training as a result of which young Jones, say, did grow up to be fairly or very plucky, considerate and trustworthy, if it was not just from sets of lecture notes, and also not just from critically supervised practical exercises by which his various proficiencies were inculcated, tested, and kept unrusty? . . . [H]ow was Jones taught or trained to want some sorts of things and not to want others; to aim at some sorts of goals and to shun others; to try to advance some sorts of causes and to despise others? If Jones is a conscientious surgeon, then his conscientiousness is no part of his dexterity, and vice versa; and the training that made him dexterous is not what made him care more for the welfare of his patient than for any competing consideration that might be suggested to him. . . . Unless we surrender and say that Jones was just born to be both asthmatic and conscientious, we seem now to be postulating a kind of learning by which he acquired not information and not proficiencies, but the caring for some sorts of things than for others; a kind of schooling as a result of which, to put it in metaphor, Jones's heart came to be set on some things and against other things.¹²¹

¹²¹ Gilbert Ryle, "Can Virtue Be Taught?" *Education and the Development of Reason*. ed. R. F. Dearden, P. H. Hirst, and R. S. Peters, (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1972) 440.

Ryle's point that caring is at the center of character seems to be in the same vein as Frankfurt's view in "The importance of what we care about." In the introduction to that essay, Frankfurt writes,

Philosophers have for some time devoted their most systematic attention to two large sets of questions. . . . In the first set, which constitutes the domain of epistemology, the questions derive in one way or another from our interest in deciding *what to believe*. The general topic of the second set is *how to behave*, insofar as this is the subject matter of ethics. It is also possible to delineate a third branch of inquiry, concerned with a cluster of questions which pertain to another thematic and fundamental preoccupation of human existence--namely, *what to care about*. . . . We are led into the third branch of inquiry . . . because we are interested in deciding what to do with *ourselves* and because we therefore need to understand what is *important* or, rather, what is *important to us*.¹²²

Joel Kupperman agrees that good moral thinking is not enough for good moral character.

[N]o one can behave reliably as a virtuous person unless she or he has steady preferences for such things as the amelioration of suffering, due respect for human dignity and autonomy, and so on. To know a good answer to a moral problem counts for very little unless one cares, at least to some degree, about what is involved in implementing (or failing to implement) the answer. . . . Moral decision-procedures do not encapsulate their own motivation.¹²³

If Ryle, Frankfurt, and Kupperman are on the right track, and I think they are, then we need to understand something about caring if we are to understand the development of character. It should be granted that caring in the general sense, taken to include identification, dispositions of various orders, and even individual instances of desire, is the appropriate arena for a thorough investigation of

¹²² Frankfurt, "The importance" 80-81.

¹²³ Kupperman, *Character* 148.

character development. To concentrate on identification and how it relates to various dispositions is to tackle only one piece of a larger puzzle of caring about moral character. For practical reasons, however, the discussion here will focus primarily on fostering morally worthy identification at the level of practice.

This means we will need some practical account of moral motivation as it is related to identification, and providing that is not a simple task. An allied, but much less difficult issue must also be addressed in order to give as complete a treatment of efforts to foster character development as possible. This is to understand how to assist persons like Jane, who have identified but who would be grateful for assistance in modifying their dispositions.

I will explore fostering character development using a familiar strategy. I will lay out two approaches that institutions might take to moral education. I will compare the efficacy of each and suggest that one is better adapted overall to the practical task of fostering the development of good character. I will then explore some of the implications this conclusion has for our understanding of identification, self-determination, and character development.

Two Approaches to Fostering Character Development

The first approach conforms to the assumption that identification is an explicit, reasoned process. The second grants that it can be, but also includes practical methods of fostering identifications that need not occur explicitly. The second approach also incorporates a practical scheme for making changes in our dispositional arrays in order to bring them more closely in accordance with our identifications.

The first approach is the more narrow one in that it appeals exclusively to improving our cognitive moral functioning at the level of explicit ethical reflection.

An institution using it would require that students take one or more courses specifically devoted to developing their moral reasoning. I will discuss how such cognitive development, taken to include developing moral sensitivity and moral imagination, can foster morally worthy identification. This approach is the usual practice in colleges and professional schools, and as such is familiar in some form to most philosophers. Still, in order to gain a more general and scientific perspective on this approach, I will lay out the dominant interpretation of it in moral psychology. This is Lawrence Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental scheme. Using a model ethics course in the cognitive developmental tradition I will show how this model is both important and helpful, but incomplete. I will suggest that while there are good reasons for retaining this traditional cognitive-developmental approach, its practical effect for the fostering of character development is weaker than we would like.

The second approach is more broad in that it does not require explicit ethical reflection to foster moral development. While the broad approach includes cognitive development in Kohlberg's sense, it adds to it an element of experiential learning through practice. The broad approach includes a requirement that students practice certain sorts of behaving. It holds that such practice can foster cognitive advances in a way that the narrow approach cannot. The broad approach is broad not only in concept but in practical scope: the practice it requires pervades school life. This means that moral education is the responsibility of the entire institution. It also recommends a method of strengthening or weakening dispositions via habituation. The broad approach thus appeals to the ancient psychology of Aristotle. In describing the broad approach fully it will be necessary to make practical sense of the claim that we become more virtuous by practicing virtuous

acts in terms of our identification's being fostered through practice. I will suggest that experiential learning can foster identification more effectively than the narrow approach alone because what is attractive about certain dispositions becomes most vivid through experience. Experience, in other words, can pay dividends not only in the cognitive realm, but also in the affective.

One more case will assist the work. John, who has never had any formal education in ethics, is a moral relativist. Like most people, his background includes some dishonesty, though he has at least an average moral character. Though possessed of a fair intellect, moral inquiry is not his special passion. John does not engage in the sort of self-examination that we have seen in Jane--he believes he functions well enough without any such introspection. John enrolls in an ethics course to satisfy our professional school's distribution requirement.

John should be familiar enough to ethics professors--he should be thought of as an unremarkable but fairly typical ethics student. Using him as our example, we can better describe the strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches to moral education.

The Narrow Approach

The narrow approach to fostering morally worthy identification relies upon the assumption that moral development is essentially cognitive development, and as such it focuses on improving the moral knowledge and moral reasoning skills of students in courses specifically tailored to these goals. Relatedly, it works to enhance students' ethical sensitivity--that is, their ability to appreciate the moral dimensions of their lives, and in particular, of choices that face them. Thus, it may be said to elicit some affective responses in students, though that is not its primary aim.

The most systematic and influential modern attempt to advocate a cognitive developmental approach to moral growth can be credited to Lawrence Kohlberg and his followers.¹²⁴ Kohlberg's advocacy of the cognitive-developmental approach has both philosophical and psychological aspects which are mutually supporting.¹²⁵ Though one might quite coherently advocate the narrow approach without subscribing to them, Kohlberg's philosophical claims are essentially Socratic. They can be boiled down for our purposes here to the contention that advances in cognitive moral skills are constitutive of moral development. In other words, Kohlberg's view holds that the story of moral development is a story of cognitive development. But that should not be taken to mean, for Kohlberg, that there is no role for affect in his scheme. "[T]he cognitive-

¹²⁴ Owen Flanagan notes that Kohlberg's 1958 doctoral dissertation "laid the foundations for what has been the dominant program in moral psychology for the last thirty years." *Varieties of Moral Personality: Ethics and Psychological Realism*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1991) 182. See also, Alan S. Waterman, "On the Uses of Psychological Theory and Research in the Process of Ethical Inquiry," *Psychological Bulletin* 103 (1988): 287.

¹²⁵ Waterman has provided a convenient summary of Kohlberg's view of the interrelationship of the philosophical and psychological aspects of his model.

"Kohlberg (1981) viewed the isomorphism between psychological theory and normative theory as a two way street. "Moral philosophical criteria of adequacy of moral judgment help define a standard of psychological adequacy or advance, and the study of psychological advance feeds back and clarifies these criteria" (Kohlberg, 1981, p 194). Thus Kohlberg (1981) maintained that if his developmental data on moral advance were not consistent with the anticipated isomorphism, his philosophical assumptions would be thrown into disarray. Because the data from his program of research are indeed consistent with his philosophical expectations, evidence for the validity of the moral philosophical perspective itself is seen as having been provided through the use of empirical research procedures." Waterman, 288.

developmental view holds that 'cognition' and 'affect' are different aspects of, or perspectives on, the same mental events."¹²⁶ I will have much to say about this later, but for now let us note that Kohlberg grounds this philosophical view at least partly in empirical research.

In support of his thesis Kohlberg claims that the main factors which have been shown to correlate with the development of a principled, predictable morality are intelligence, moral knowledge (i.e. knowledge of the rules of a society), the tendency to anticipate future events, the ability to maintain focused attention, the capacity to control unsocialized fantasies and self esteem. The major consistencies in moral conduct represent decision making capacities rather than fixed behavior traits.¹²⁷

The empirical aspect of the work has generated considerable critical literature, though it is not of relevance here.¹²⁸ Kohlberg's empirical research is important for

¹²⁶ Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stages of Development as a Basis for Education," *Moral Development, Moral Education, and Kohlberg*, ed. Brenda Munsey (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1980) 40.

¹²⁷ R. S. Peters, "Education and Human Development," Dearden, Hurst, and Peters 507.

¹²⁸ Probably the most famous criticism of the work has been presented by Carol Gilligan, though her criticism has itself been controversial. Gilligan does not disagree with the cognitive-developmental model, but rather to Kohlberg's scale of developmental stages being justice and rights-oriented. This orientation, according to Gilligan, reflects a specifically male bias. Waterman characterizes the disagreement nicely in his literature review.

"On the basis of the female experience, women are said to progress through an analogous set of stages focused instead on an ethics of care and responsibility. Both orientations are seen as having comparable legitimacy. Whereas Kohlberg's work is articulated with the formalist philosophers concerned with justice, Gilligan's theorizing can be shown to be consistent with a different body of moral philosophy, for example, Murdoch (1970), Susky (1979), and Flanagan (1982)." See Waterman, 289.

For a comprehensive critique of the cognitive-developmental scheme, and Kohlberg and Gilligan in particular, see Flanagan, 161-252.

our purposes only in its claim that moral reasoning can be fostered by education, and that claim is not in dispute.

Kohlberg developed a scale against which moral reasoning can be assessed. Though it has appeared in different guises, the general point of the scale is to rate the stages of moral reasoning ordinally, with naive egoism on the lower end, a socially conformist orientation in the middle, and an orientation toward universal moral principles on the upper. Education in moral reasoning is said to foster progress upward along the scale.

The cognitive-developmental scheme should foster morally worthy identification by virtue of its fostering improved moral reasoning. Kohlberg's Socratic contentions notwithstanding, it seems as though this can occur in two ways. One way accords with Kohlberg's view that moral reasons are motivating reasons, the other views moral reasoning as instrumental to accomplishing what we are motivated nonrationally to do. At the practical level, we need not take a side in the historical debate over reason's motivational powers, for the cognitive developmental approach can be shown to be compatible with both views.

First let us examine how improvements in moral reasoning can foster morally worthy identification even if that identification is not motivated by moral reasoning. As one's moral reasoning improved, one could employ it more powerfully as a tool of moral calculation. We can, for example, imagine someone who is motivated by feeling sorry for homeless people. He is, we might say, pretheoretically benevolently disposed to help the homeless. This individual typically gives the street people he meets some cash upon their request for it. They are always very grateful, and he always feels good about himself after giving, and this helps spur his identification with his benevolent disposition.

But then he takes an ethics course and his moral reasoning skills improve. Having become familiar with the principles of utilitarianism, he now understands the importance of the longer-term consequences of his actions and can think of his disposition to give in terms of its tendency to promote the general utility. Still motivated by feeling sorry for the homeless, he now identifies against his urge to give upon request because he is sensitive to the potential for his direct cash gifts to do more harm than good. Instead, he now makes a point of funding and working in the local Salvation Army soup kitchen. Homeless people who had become accustomed to his direct gifts now treat him as though he has betrayed them, and he must identify against any disposition to seek approval from them, because he knows now that this is a suspect motive from the moral point of view. His cognitive development has led him to modify his identifications with his dispositions, but it would be incorrect to say that his moral reasoning motivates the change in identification. Rather, his reason serves as a tool to identify more wisely with dispositions which, if they lead to action, will ultimately optimize the effect of his benevolent efforts.

The second way in which cognitive development might foster morally worthy identification accords with Kohlberg's philosophical views. That is, moral reasoning might itself have some motivating power. One of Kant's examples comes to mind. He describes the benevolent man who becomes mired in his own sorrows so deeply that any benevolent disposition he may have is no longer motivating, yet who still works to help the needy.¹²⁹ For such an individual, moral motivation is

¹²⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1964) 66.

traceable to the dictates of morality itself. He helps the needy, to use Kant's famous phrase, for the *sake* of duty. Consequently, at least for cases like Kant has in mind, it would be correct to say that developing moral cognition fosters identification directly because moral motivation is explicable in cognitive terms alone.

We can conclude our brief outline of the narrow approach by noting that it is not necessary to follow Kohlberg's Socratic views in order to understand how using it might foster character development. The cognitive-developmental approach makes sense under the assumption that improving moral reasoning is constitutive of moral education, but it also makes sense under the view that improving moral reasoning is only instrumental to moral education.

Strengths of the Narrow Approach

Let us begin by taking advantage of empirical research supporting the claim that moral reasoning skills can be fostered through intelligent educational efforts. In Kohlberg's words,

In practice . . . our experimental efforts at moral education have involved getting students at one level, say Stage 2, to argue with those at the next level, say Stage 3. The teacher would support and clarify the Stage 3 arguments. Then he would pit the Stage 3 students against the Stage 4 students on a new dilemma. Initial results with this method with a junior high school group indicated that 50 percent of the students moved up one stage and 10 percent moved up two stages. In comparison, only 10 percent of a control group moved up one stage in the four month period involved.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Lawrence Kohlberg, "Moral Development: A Modern Statement of the Platonic View," *Issues in Moral Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Donaldson (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986) 44.

We can enjoy some measure of confidence in these results; they have been replicated frequently. More, the efficacy of education does not seem to be limited to school-age children. James Rest has shown that cognitive moral development can be fostered well into adulthood, and that education, not merely age, is responsible for much of the development.¹³¹

Taking this research at face value, there seem to be good empirical reasons for believing that education can foster the growth of moral reasoning skills, at least as measured by Kohlberg and his followers. Indeed, this is just what we would hope and expect. But now we must move on to the more critical issue; we need to consider whether this improvement in reasoning translates into fostering the development of moral character.

Though I am unaware of any empirical research on moral reasoning's relationship to moral character, we may nevertheless gain some insight by looking into the relationship between moral reasoning skills, as measured by Kohlberg, and observed behavior. Extensive research has shown a positive though by no means strong correlation between higher scores on the Kohlberg scale and morally worthy behavior.¹³² At minimum, it seems well established that the narrow approach yields dividends in moral reasoning and moral conduct. It certainly would not be inconsistent to hope that moral reasoning skills can enhance morally worthy

¹³¹ James Rest and Darcia Narvaez, "The College Experience and Moral Development," *Handbook of Moral Behavior and Development Volume 2: Research*, ed. William Kurtines and Jacob Gewirtz (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1991) 234-35.

¹³² Waterman, 288-89.

identification as well, even if there is no formal empirical evidence in support of this claim.

In order to understand why, let us make more clear how the narrow approach might work in practice by outlining the objectives of a model ethics course using it. Daniel Callahan has suggested a set of goals for formal courses in ethics which I shall adopt for the model course.¹³³ One reason for adopting his goals lies in the rich interpretation he takes of cognitive development--he takes as broad an approach as is possible while still remaining representative of the narrow approach. It is unlikely that any course could actually meet all of these goals, but we will assume here that our model course does meet them in order to show the narrow approach in its best possible light.

Callahan's list of goals begins with "stimulating the moral imagination," by which he seems to mean eliciting pretheoretical reactions to real world situations having obvious moral dimensions. For Callahan, the moral imagination is "the very source of a drive to get straight on ethics." As such it is especially important to stimulate it in introductory ethics courses. Callahan also suggests that ethics courses should teach students how to recognize ethical issues. We might think that part of learning to recognize ethical issues has to do with becoming sensitive to the moral aspects of our lives, and it seems likely that Callahan would agree with this. But for him, recognizing ethical issues consists of learning to make a "conscious rational attempt to sort out those elements in emotional responses that represent appraisal and judgment." Doing so will "require the examination of concepts, of

¹³³ Daniel Callahan, "Goals in the Teaching of Ethics," *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education*, ed. Daniel Callahan and Sissela Bok (New York: Plenum Press, 1980) 61-80.

prescriptive moral statements, and of ethical principles and rules." Closely related is the goal of "developing analytical skills," which is obviously required if students are to use the principles effectively. Callahan also suggests that an ethics course should foster "tolerating--and reducing--disagreement and ambiguity." Students should learn to live with the fact that the study of ethics provides few easy answers to difficult questions. Indeed, such study involves a willingness to reexamine presuppositions, and, of course, a willingness to sort out disagreements civilly. We can conclude our list with Callahan's suggestion that ethics courses should "elicit a sense of moral obligation." That is, students should gain an appreciation that moral reasons should in some sense translate into their behavior.¹³⁴

For our purposes this brief summary of Callahan's goals can be accepted as representing a well-thought-out narrow approach. Let us suppose John takes this course from Callahan and reaches all of its goals. What might we expect John to learn?

First, it seems that John will gain at least three distinct, though mutually reinforcing, sorts of cognitive capacities: knowledge, proficiency, and sensitivity.

The gain in knowledge can be described as learning a system of inquiry and description. John will learn a set of standard moral principles that have become well established in the tradition of ethics, and as such at minimum he has a new vocabulary for describing and addressing moral concerns. More importantly, John will gain proficiency in moral reasoning--that is, in using the principles he learns. What had previously been a vague uneasiness with certain facts about the world now has a name, and a surrounding body of thought which, if John wrestles with it

¹³⁴ Callahan, "Goals" 64-69.

sufficiently, can help him define his own feelings into thoughts in an argument. John can now explain and defend his preexisting belief, say, that breaking promises is wrong. John may even develop his facility in the tactful expression of his moral reasoning to the point of being able to persuade others to come to share his reasoning.

Third, and equally importantly, John will come to appreciate the moral aspects of various situations and the role he plays in them. John's increased sensitivity to the ethical dimension of life will let him bring his moral reasoning and knowledge to bear where he would have been oblivious before taking the course.

It seems fair to say that these increases in cognitive ability can all result from the narrow approach to character development. And there seem to be good reasons to think that these skills will foster better character. After all, if John comes to understand the ethical perspective on his life he may come to realize that there are some things he could do to make himself more morally worthy. That is, improved moral reasoning may function instrumentally for John's character development. More, if part of understanding moral reasoning is understanding that we are obligated to act in accordance with what moral reason dictates, then John may move to identify in ways that would improve his character. It may be, that is, that John will find that his improved cognitive capabilities in fact do motivate him to identify according to moral standards, and to modify his dispositions. In this case, we could say that John's cognitive development is constitutive of his moral education.

Two of Callahan's goals bear closer examination here because they seem to have the most direct relationship to fostering morally worthy identification. The

first is the goal of "eliciting a sense of moral obligation." The second is the goal of "stimulating the moral imagination."

The first, the sense of obligation, is said to be elicited if the course "highlight[s] with students an internal requirement of ethical thinking: that it calls us to act in the light of what we perceive to be right and good."¹³⁵ This relies on there being a close psychological relationship between a cognitive understanding of what morality demands and a conation to act in accordance with those demands. But whether there is such a close relationship is controversial. In the previous chapter we posited that such a relationship did in fact obtain in Jane, and we suggested, with Samuel Scheffler, that it might be explained along the lines of psychoanalytic theory. But to assume that there is such a relationship for everyone, or even most people, is to make a very bold assumption indeed.

This is why Callahan's goal of "stimulating the moral imagination" is important. It provides a way of supplying an element of moral motivation to students without relying on a tight connection between understanding the demands of morality and being motivated by them. Though it must be acknowledged that this goal may lie partially outside of the confines of the narrow approach, let us assume that there is room within the narrow approach for evoking affective responses in students in order to show the narrow approach to best advantage. "Stimulating the moral imagination" involves, in part, motivating students to study ethics in the first place by appealing to their feelings. In other words, if Scheffler's structural hypothesis is wrong, Callahan can still rely on the standard naturalistic accounts that limit reason to a purely instrumental role in morality. "The emotional

¹³⁵ Callahan, "Goals" 66.

side of students must first be elicited or evoked--empathy, feeling, caring, sensibility."¹³⁶ Callahan makes the practical suggestion that we look outside of traditional ethics texts in order to elicit these feelings. "The use of novels, plays, and films can be very effective at this point, often far more successfully stimulating the imagination than can be done with ordinary reading fare in philosophical or theological ethics."¹³⁷ If these methods work, motivating students to study ethics and to take moral reasoning seriously as instrumental to bettering their character, then we can concede that moral reasons do not always count as motivating reasons and still retain motivation to identify in accordance with, if not because of, the results of moral analysis. That is, if the course is successful in stimulating the moral imagination, students like John might become motivated morally even if they were not motivated by an internal requirement of ethical thinking. By including recommendations both for eliciting a sense of obligation and for stimulating the moral imagination, Callahan has, so to speak, hedged his bets.

Let us see how Callahan's approach to moral motivation might play out in practice. Suppose that John, good student that he is, never feels the conative aspect of reason that Kohlberg believes exists. That is, suppose that John never does grow to feel a sense of moral obligation from the internal requirements of moral thought. Callahan's course could still stimulate the moral imagination, and thereby succeed in fostering morally worthy identification by bald appeal to John's emotions. John may, for example, have lived his life in blissful ignorance of the

¹³⁶ Callahan, "Goals" 65.

¹³⁷ Callahan, "Goals" 65.

basic precepts of utilitarianism. He might likewise have been ignorant of the plight of those suffering, often alone, in nursing homes and hospices. But Callahan's course has met its goal of engaging the students affectively. John's sympathy for suffering people is elicited by Callahan's having made the patients' plight vivid in the classroom. Further, the dissonance between what John grasps intellectually as a right to be free from unwarranted suffering, and the pain inflicted by the callous disregard of many in our society for the elderly or terminally ill, could easily elicit in him a sense of obligation where none had existed before. And it seems likely that John might come to value having a disposition to alleviate suffering as a part of his character in a way that he did not before taking the course. John's awareness of the principles of utilitarianism gives him a way of describing the immorality attendant to treating weak and innocent people this way. He can understand his place in this moral world and resolve to do something about it. Hence, it would be fair to say that Callahan's ethics course has fostered a morally worthy identification. In short, there are excellent reasons to believe that the narrow approach can work to foster morally worthy identifications even if one does not follow in the Socratic tradition.

But one additional strength must be mentioned. The narrow approach, properly executed, cannot be accused of being a course of indoctrination. Callahan is careful to recommend steering clear of teaching approved solutions. He explicitly rejects teaching "a preestablished blueprint of what would count as acceptable moral behavior."¹³⁸ This is because such teaching would in large measure undermine a major function of teaching ethics in the first place--that of fostering the students' ability to come to ethical conclusions for themselves.

¹³⁸ Callahan, "Goals" 70.

Callahan suggests we follow Bernard Rosen's suggestion that one of our aims should be to make the ethics teacher dispensable. "The highest state of dispensability is reached when your student not only does not need you to arrive at justified judgments, but does not need you to arrive at the method that is used to arrive at justified judgments."¹³⁹ In other words, when the student's cognitive capacity in moral reasoning approaches that possessed by his professor, the job of fostering cognitive development is done. But that is different from saying the job is not done until the student agrees with the professor. To teach a blueprint is to undermine the ability to design ethical plans for oneself.

This is of course correct; identification can be fostered by others, but it can only be performed by the self. Likewise, the goal of moral education should not be to change behavior, but rather to equip students with the ability to understand when morality dictates that they should change their behavior and to do so.

With respect to behavior . . . the most important goal would be that of providing the student with those ingredients of ethical analysis and self-criticism, such that he would, *if* the analysis seemed to require it, both recognize the importance of changing behavior, and be prepared to change. The question is not whether courses should automatically change behavior, but whether the course would help a student to know the importance of changing his or her behavior if that was what a moral judgment seemed to entail. It is not change *per se* that should be the goal, but the potentiality for change as a result of ethical analysis and judgment.¹⁴⁰

The idealized narrow approach, then, results in enhancing students' capacity to change, but it does not demand that they do any changing. This is perhaps the best reason for taking the cognitive-developmental approach to fostering morally

¹³⁹ Rosen is quoted in Callahan, "Goals" 68.

¹⁴⁰ Callahan, "Goals" 70.

worthy identification: it respects the students' competence to make their own choices. There is a good case to be made for sticking to the narrow approach because, while it fosters morally worthy identification, it also seems to respect students' authority to decide for themselves whether to identify in some way.

The Inadequacy of the Narrow Approach

Callahan's goals are well conceived, but there is room for improvement in three general areas. First, it is not unusual for even very well-educated people to fail to heed the counsels of moral reason. This may result from students' failure to grasp the special nature of moral obligation or to have a sufficiently vivid moral imagination. In either case, their deficiency lies more in the area of moral motivation than in the area of moral reasoning. It could be that Callahan graduates some very clever sophists.

There are good common sense reasons for this concern. Most professors of philosophy would acknowledge that even those students who become extraordinarily adept at moral reasoning may often leave the classroom, or institution, with characters no different from the characters they had on the first day of classes. At the level of practice we cannot assume that cognitive development includes a motivational component. Empirical research suggests that while there is a correlation between moral reasoning skills and moral conduct, it would be a mistake to think that moral reasoning skills are strongly correlated to moral conduct. In the words of Augusto Blasi, who has conducted the most exhaustive review of the literature of which I am aware,

The body of research reviewed . . . seems to offer considerable support for the hypothesis that moral reasoning and moral action are statistically related. This statement, however, should be qualified as soon as one looks at the findings in more detail. Empirical support, in fact, varies from area to

area: It is strongest for the hypotheses that moral reasoning differs between delinquents and nondelinquents and that at higher stages of moral reasoning, there is greater resistance to the pressure of conforming one's judgment to others' views. The support is clear but less strong for the hypothesis that higher moral stage individuals tend to be more honest and more altruistic. Finally, there is little support for the expectation that individuals of the . . . [most developed] level resist more than others the social pressure to conform in their moral action.¹⁴¹

The typical ethics student can be relied upon to learn new skills, but that is a far cry from saying that her character is thereby improved.

Likewise, it is an unfortunate but undeniable fact that there are artful practitioners of moral reasoning whom most of us would not trust as having morally decent character. This is because, as Gilbert Ryle puts it,

[A] proficiency can always be improperly as well as properly employed. The marksman who is able to hit the bull's-eye whenever or nearly whenever he wants to is also able mutinously to miss it whenever he wants. The clever surgeon, who can repair internal lesions, has the skill necessary to cause fatal lesions, if the heirs to the patient's fortune can bribe him to do so. . . . What we object to about the surgeon who dexterously brings about the death of his patient is not any flaw in his surgical techniques, but the ends to which he exercises them.¹⁴²

Now, it may be objected that the skill of a marksman or a surgeon is not analogous to the skill of an excellent moral thinker. It might be said that those who would misuse moral skills for bad ends do not possess those skills in the first place. This is the position that Kohlberg takes. But if the Socratic thesis that to know the good entails behaving in accordance with that knowledge is accurate, then the cognitive development that we measure by having students write ethics papers or

¹⁴¹ Augusto Blasi, "Bridging Moral Cognition and Moral Action: A Critical Review of the Literature," *Psychological Bulletin* 88 (1980): 37.

¹⁴² Ryle, "Can Virtue" 439.

take exams measures something other than that sort of knowledge. Put another way, even if we were to grant the Socratic thesis, we would still have to admit that doing well in the typical college ethics class does not necessarily imply that students are gaining the sort of knowledge that Socrates had in mind. This is not to deny that there may be a strong correlation between possessing good moral reasoning skills and possessing a good character, but it is to say that the possession of good moral reasoning skills is not sufficient for a good moral character.

What is missing in many such cases, of course, is psychic identification with the morally worthy dispositions reason recommends to us. But the failure of moral knowledge to lead to a modification in character could also result from an altogether different sort of inadequacy. It may result from certain unwelcome dispositions being so well entrenched that they can lead to action against the counsels of reason. It is not unusual for people to have aspects of their characters with which they are dissatisfied, perhaps in part because those aspects seem contrary to their own reason. This raises the second shortcoming of the narrow approach: it has nothing to offer someone like Jane. Jane's inadequate integration could even be described as being in part a product of her having met some of Callahan's goals. She is motivated to change her dispositions, and she can describe her motives in terms of moral principles, but needs help determining her character. Sadly, she would be ill-advised to consult an ethicist for help in determining her dispositions to be more congenial to her concern for the cause of justice. Jane already knows that justice is valuable--it is in part just this knowledge that brings about her guilt after a failure to promote it. Jane is not deficient in moral knowledge or moral reasoning skills. She is lacking the character her knowledge informs her she should have.

Third, Callahan's course seems to require explicit reflection, employing moral principles, in order to foster morally worthy identification. Yet, if it is correct to believe that we often identify implicitly, it seems that the narrow approach overlooks a rich range of identification. We must not overlook the fact that there are many people who seem to have excellent moral character without ever having had any formal training in ethics. More, many people seem to possess a good moral character without ever, or only rarely, explicitly reflecting on moral issues. Some people just seem to be naturals, even if they never make their good moral character explicit to themselves.

So we are left with good reasons for thinking that a good character can develop in the absence of formal education in moral reasoning, and that formal education does not entail the development of decent character. While this conclusion should not be taken to imply that ethics should not be taught, it does imply that the story of character development is importantly different from the story of cognitive development in moral reasoning. Developing a strength in explicit ethical reflection over the sorts of character we ought to embody is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for developing a good character.

None of this is to suggest that the narrow approach is misguided or ill-conceived. Callahan's prescription for a good ethics course meshes well with our everyday notions of what it takes to become aware of morally upright living. It is, however, to suggest that a broad approach may be more adequate still to the task of fostering character development.

The Broad Approach: A Look at an Aristotelian Contribution

Given the shortcomings of the narrow approach, we need to consider what other efforts might be made to foster morally decent identification. I want to

suggest that some dispositions seem to invite psychic identification more than others, but that the invitation often can be garnered only by experience. Consequently, the broad approach takes nothing away from the narrow approach, but only adds to it an element of experiential learning.

It is almost hackneyed to appeal to Aristotle for insights into character development. As I have no interest in covering well-traveled ground yet again, I shall simply take the thesis that we become proficient by practice as a given. Our advice to someone like Jane, then, is conceptually fairly simple: she should practice acting as a person of moral courage would act. I will discuss just how we might facilitate this practice in a subsequent section.

More important for our purposes is to explain why someone might identify with the disposition that is inculcated by practice. The distinction between inculcating a disposition and identifying with that disposition must be kept in mind here. They are both important for character development, but they address different aspects of the narrow approach's inadequacy. Let us consider the first shortcoming here. We want to understand not just how some disposition toward virtuous conduct might be ingrained by practice, but rather how good *character* is encouraged by habituation. In other words, we are primarily interested in what explains the *identification* with the disposition that is inculcated by habit.

I have argued above that knowledge is not sufficient for decent character. Here I want to add, with Aristotle, that behavior or conduct is not enough either. Instead, what seems to be necessary is behavior motivated by *the right reasons*.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ One relevant passage from the *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Actions, then, are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or the temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the

Put into our terminology, if one behaves justly from a morally worthy disposition yet identifies against that disposition, then one cannot be said to be behaving justly for the right reasons. On the other hand, if one is behaving from a morally good disposition with which one identifies, explicitly or not, then one does seem to be behaving for the right reasons.

I take it as well enough established that we develop dispositions through practice. What I want to establish in addition is that we can become *attracted* to certain dispositions through practicing acting as though we possessed them. That is, not only do we inculcate, say, a disposition to behave generously through behaving generously, but the experience of so acting can bring about an appreciation for the disposition in a way that a purely cognitive-developmental approach may not. That is, practice not only ingrains a disposition, it can sometimes encourage identification with that same disposition because we can be attracted to it through experience.

Suppose we believe that a disposition toward honesty is part of a good character. We can certainly teach this in our classrooms, appealing to various well-established ethical theories and perhaps illustrating them with cases. From this, John should gain some cognitive development. He would then, perhaps, learn that it is obligatory to avoid deceiving others.

But our institution might also require that its students live under an honor code which prohibits dishonest behavior, and it might back up the code with a system of sanctions. Although the design of such a system is beyond my scope, I do think it appropriate to place its administration, to the maximim extent possible,

man who also does them *as* just and temperate men do them." Aristotle, 956 (1105b5-9).

in the hands of the student body. There are a number of good reasons for this, but the most important is that it facilitates each student's trusting in the honorable character of other students. That is, it not only demands that students meet the standards of the code individually, but that they practice policing their own community for each other, just as we hope professionals do in the day-to-day exercise of their professions.

Living under such an honor system, John would supposedly become proficient at behaving honestly through practice. Of course such an approach could backfire. Indeed, it is possible that some students will never be sensitive to the sublime pleasures of honesty and will resent the efforts to teach through practice. These concerns must, of course, be addressed when administering any honor code in an institution. It cannot be denied that all John may learn is how to avoid getting caught--he may learn cleverness instead of honesty.

But fear of this effect should not preclude using the broad approach. Just as we continue to teach mathematics even in the face of what sometimes seems to be invincible mathematical ineptitude, so we should take a progressive attitude toward the experiential learning approach to moral education. Not everyone will succeed, but to compare any sort of developmental program to the goal of 100% success is to set an unachievable goal. John might, by practicing honest behavior, learn to identify with a disposition to behave honestly. Put bluntly, he won't just learn to behave honestly from a fear of getting caught, he will learn to like being the sort of person who behaves honestly. The real comparison should be made with the narrow approach, and it seems likely that the broad approach will do a better job of fostering identification. Let us now see why.

With the honor-code example in mind, we can turn to some of M. F. Burnyeat's remarks on the Aristotelian notion of habituation. Burnyeat suggests that there are two important effects of inculcating proficiency through habituation. First, "practice has cognitive powers."¹⁴⁴ That is, we learn not only how to do something by doing it, but that certain properties, such as justice, do indeed belong to that doing. Burnyeat writes,

[Y]ou need to be guided in your conduct so that by doing the things you are told are noble and just you will discover that what you have been told is *true*. What you may begin by taking on trust you can come to know for yourself. This is not yet to know *why* it is true, but it is to have *learned that* it is true in the sense of having made the judgment your own. . . . You can say, perhaps, "I have learned that it is just to share my belongings with others," and mean it in a way that someone who has just been told this cannot, even if he believes it--except in the weak sense in which "I have learned such and such" means simply that such and such was the content of the instruction given by parent or teacher.¹⁴⁵

In other words, practice pays a dividend not just in proficiency, but also in the cognitive appreciation of the moral quality of the behavior practiced. It does not seem farfetched to suggest that John would be in a much better position to learn ethical theories about moral integrity after living under the code than before. This is because the experience of living in a community in which honest behavior is the norm can bring home its value at the level of first-person experience in a way that classroom discussions cannot. John might, for example, never have lived under an honor code previously. As a consequence, he had worried about whether his

¹⁴⁴ M. F. Burnyeat, "Aristotle on Learning to Be Good," *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amelie O. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) 73.

¹⁴⁵ Burnyeat, 74.

belongings would be safe when he was not watching them, or whether his classmates might be cheating him out of some desirable award. Now, however, he can have confidence that his classmates are behaving honestly, as he himself is, and as such his life is relieved of at least those sorts of worries.

But this feeling of comparative safety and security does nothing to teach John the value of *his* honesty. All it does is demonstrate the value of living in a generally honest community. This is where the second, and more important, effect comes into play. Our first-person appreciation of the nobility of particular sorts of behavior can ground a subjective attraction to it. In other words, experience can have crucial effects in moral motivation. According to Burnyeat, this is one reason that Aristotle claims that the pleasure or pain persons take in particular acts can serve as indications of their character.¹⁴⁶ As Burnyeat puts it:

I may be told, and may believe, that such and such actions are just and noble, but I have not really learned for myself (taken to heart, made second nature to me) that they have this intrinsic value until I have learned to value (love) them for it, with the consequence that I take pleasure in doing them. To understand and appreciate the value that makes them enjoyable in themselves I must learn for myself to enjoy them, and that does take time and practice--in short, habituation.¹⁴⁷

If this interpretation of Aristotle seems plausible, we might have a clue to how the development of decent character can be fostered more robustly by using the broad approach than by using the narrow approach. The vital element is that students must appreciate *for themselves* that certain dispositions are worthy of integration into the self. That is, there must be a subjective attraction to certain

¹⁴⁶ Burnyeat, 77.

¹⁴⁷ Burnyeat, 78.

dispositions that encourages identification with those dispositions. The narrow approach attempts to accomplish this through appeal to the moral imagination and by eliciting a sense of moral obligation. The broad approach includes these tactics, but adds first-person experience. As this attraction is made more vivid through the experience of living under an honor code, incorporating such a code across an institution is one way of fostering the development of decent moral character.¹⁴⁸ More, we can imagine students for whom the broad approach may be the only effective approach. Even if John's moral imagination remains dormant in the classroom, and he is insensible of any connection between moral reasons and his own life, he might still be susceptible to learning through first-person experience. Identification is then more likely to follow than it would have been in the absence of the experience. If we think back to Jane's self-regarding moral emotions, we can see that this scheme is consistent with her pride in having forced herself to quell her timidity and behave courageously on some occasion when she ordinarily would have let her timidity get the better of her. Jane has felt what it is like to stand up for justice, and that feeling can only result from doing. It is also consistent with Jane's self-rebuke after having let the cause of justice down. Experiential learning is a learning of its own kind.

It seems then that we learn to value at least some dispositions from the outside in. Just as the adolescent coffee-drinker learns to appreciate coffee by

¹⁴⁸ Other such institution-wide codes merit consideration. One which comes to mind is the imposition of speech-codes in universities. Though these codes are usually imposed a way of protecting students who might be harmed by offensive language, it is worthwhile to consider whether these codes foster sensitivity to the dignity of others in a way that would be lacking in the absence of such codes.

pretending he does, so the broad approach maintains that the developer of virtue must practice acting in particular ways in order to learn through first-person experience that such actions are worthwhile, and to gain a first-person appreciation that the disposition to perform them is a desirable part of the character. Contrary to what we may at first think, and to what seems to be presupposed by the cognitive developmental model, it is at least plausible that the cognitive understanding of moral matters sometimes may follow rather than precede behavior. This allows us to address directly another area in which the narrow approach seems inadequate. Implicit identifications may be fostered through experience. More, they may be fostered in those who, for various reasons, would not be susceptible to moral education via the narrow approach. We can imagine someone whose cognitive limitations simply prevented his being admitted to a formal course in ethics, or at least made it very difficult, and frustrating for him. Such a person, however, could still learn through experience.

This is not to say that reflection on morality is ineffective, but it is to say that it is not as central to the development of good moral character as the narrow approach assumes. Explicit moral reflection often seems to consist of realizing something about our characters and doing an evaluation against moral standards. Consequently, it can serve as a way of monitoring the self, and, as I suggested in Chapter III, it can help us understand the most worthy objects of identification. But this sort of explicit self-evaluation plays a much larger part in theories of autonomy than it does in identification. Identification can be informed by reason, but that does not mean that it is in its essence a cognitive phenomenon. While a theory of autonomy might highlight the importance of explicit self-evaluation as a

prelude to identifications, that does not mean that all identifications occur only as part of an introspective process. As Burnyeat puts it:

[I]t follows not only that for a long time moral development must be a less than fully rational process but also, what is less often acknowledged, that a mature morality must in large part continue to be what it originally was, a matter of responses deriving from sources other than reflective reason. These being the fabric of moral character, in the fully developed man of virtue and practical wisdom they have become integrated with, indeed they are now infused and corrected by, his reasoned scheme of values.¹⁴⁹

Think again of the sketch of identification drawn in the preceding chapters. We suggested that identification is informed by reason in a way that dispositions are not. More, we said that, at least for someone like Jane, it is virtually certain that she would identify with her disposition to promote justice as opposed to her excessively timid disposition. That is, Jane commits herself to the disposition in accordance with what reason would recommend. But that is different from saying that Jane's commitment is motivated by reason.

Now we have another piece of the puzzle. We can explain why Jane's knowledge that justice was important seems to have an affective component. It is because Jane knows that justice is important *for her*. This is not the sort of knowledge that is conveyed through a study of ethical theory but which, rather, is conveyed by experience. It so happens that Jane's experiences have imparted to her a sort of knowledge that her reason can validate, but justice is not important to her just on account of the counsels of reason. Rather, Jane identifies with her disposition to promote justice because she has a kind of learning that is confirmed

¹⁴⁹ Burnyeat, 80.

by, but not contained in, her ethics classes.¹⁵⁰ Moral reasoning can provide Jane with a tool to understand her identification and can perhaps serve to reinforce it, but it cannot make her identify with her disposition. The disposition has a magnetism for Jane, however, that her reason can explain in moral terms.

Like Callahan's scheme, the broad approach hedges its bets in terms of moral motivation. But it does so in a more comprehensive fashion than is true of the cognitive-developmental approach. It supplements moral imagination and a sense of moral obligation with a third source of motivation which can be gained only through experience.

It may be objected that this approach is weak exactly where I have suggested that Callahan's is strong. That is, it may seem that the broad approach is guilty of socializing students in much the same way we have supposed that Jane's timidity was socialized in her. It seems inappropriate to some to demand that students conform to some standard without having chosen for themselves to do so. Consequently, it might be argued, suggesting that students might develop honest characters by practicing honest behavior under a threat of sanction gets things backwards.

To reply to this, let me remark first of all that we cannot avoid experience. All educational institutions put their students through certain experiences, both in class and out. While the experience might be intensified if a student lives on campus in a dorm, it is nonetheless present for all students to the degree that they participate in the campus community. Every educational community, and indeed,

¹⁵⁰ According to Burnyeat's reading of Aristotle, with which I concur, this is just what makes Jane educable. Burnyeat, 78.

every department, imparts a cultural experience to its students as well as academic learning. That these experiences seem to remain in the background of the educational process is not to say that they are not part of it. But it is to say that any learning that goes on through these experiences is susceptible to a more serious charge of being a kind of socialization. This is true just because it is not highlighted as a part of the education students receive--its effects can, therefore, be insidious. The broad approach, by contrast, highlights just what the narrow approach overlooks, by explicitly recognizing the role of experience in shaping character. It consequently respects students' authority over themselves as much as, if not more than, the narrow approach just because it makes the role of experience in our lives vivid.

More, it must be pointed out that no institution using the broad approach should matriculate a student who is not fully informed of its mechanics and their implications for her success. That is to say that any socialization that goes on is not susceptible to the charge of being either unconsented to or insidious.

Last, requiring students to practice certain ways of behaving is different from requiring them to like these experiences, though of course, as in our example, it is hoped that they will learn to appreciate honesty through practicing it. Still, there is nothing in the broad approach, any more than there is in the narrow approach, that undermines the authority of a student's identifying self. It might be said that the broad approach views experience more as a learning device than as a teaching device. Students learn *for themselves* through experience in a way that is impossible in a class. But nothing about the broad approach mandates this learning. Just as the only mandate under the narrow approach is for a certain standard of academic *performance*, so the only requirement under the broad approach is for a

certain standard of honest *behavior*. The development of character is, under either approach, still very much a private business.

Implications for Self-Determination and Character Development

Modeling

If the foregoing discussion about the importance of experiential learning is on the right track, we may be able to apply some of its elements to improve our understanding of how role modeling might work in fostering character development. We have noted that it is one thing for Jane to know that it is unworthy to allow the demands of justice to be overridden by timidity, and another thing for Jane to have personally allowed *her* timidity to harm the cause of the justice *she* values. Likewise, it is one thing to learn of the value of moral courage as an instrument to the promotion of justice, but it is another thing to see it characteristically displayed.

Now, of course, there is an obvious cognitive dividend in seeing certain behaviors modeled. Examples teach in a way that descriptions do not, in part by making the abstract more concrete. More, seeing some behavior modeled lets us know that it can be performed by human beings in a way that saying it should be performed fails to convey. But this is not what is central to the importance of models in fostering morally worthy identification, for that is at least as much an affective matter as a cognitive one. Seeing morally courageous acts performed reliably by another permits us to make certain inferences about the character of the person performing them. We might say, this is a person who embodies the valued trait and thereby makes the trait vivid in a way that a purely cognitive appreciation of the virtue of moral courage does not. Even though seeing a friend display moral

courage is much less vivid a learning experience than the first-person experience of behaving courageously, it is still more vivid than a purely cognitive understanding of the importance of moral courage. We admire the trait in practice in a different way from the way we admire the trait in theory.¹⁵¹

This admiration of a displayed trait seems to have some of the characteristics Burnyeat attributes to the sort of learning that occurs through practice. While it would be a mistake to call this first-person learning, it does seem to have a personal quality that is lacking in the more abstract sort of appreciation we might have for the idea of moral courage. Seeing moral courage routinely can, of course, have a cognitive effect: it can show one *how* to be courageous. But that is not what is key to understanding the attractiveness for identification. We can appreciate moral courage by seeing it modeled in a way that we simply cannot via a more narrow cognitive understanding of moral courage as a virtue.

Of course not everyone who sees people displaying various admirable traits of character admires them for it. But that is not to say that the power of good example is weak. This is in part because we are social beings, and the demands of functioning in a society are better met by placing trust in those of decent character than they are by placing our trust less judiciously. But trusting someone and wanting to be more like some aspect of her are different things. The latter is better

¹⁵¹ Though there is a substantial body of psychological literature on the topic of incorporating traits into one's character through imitation of others who seem to embody those traits, space precludes my discussing it. Instead I take the claim that models can foster certain sorts of identification as another common-sense starting point for looking into the practical matter of character development. One good source for beginning investigation into this literature is Howard Kamler, *Identification and Character* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

explained by appeal to the same sort of phenomenon we noted earlier--the nobility of certain traits is more palpable in person than in the abstract. In much the way that seeing Yo Yo Ma makes an abstract respect for his virtuosity into something much more immediate and palpable, so seeing an acquaintance display moral courage exerts an attractive force for that trait that is more vivid in person than in the abstract. As such, the likelihood of our identification is increased.

If the foregoing claims about the power of example are on the right track, we can appreciate the importance of moral character in the very persons who would foster character development in others. These persons present what might be thought of as a retail display of various traits. Some of these traits will be selected over others for identification. As Howard Kamler remarks, "people tend to identify with the ideas, institutions, physical objects, and other things to which they have been most exposed. . . . We decide parts of who we would be by seriously considering the modeled traits we just happen to have in front of us."¹⁵² Though Kamler is writing here of identification in the psychoanalytic tradition, under which traits attract identification on account of their perceived value as instruments to the satisfaction of certain desires, his point is valid in the related sense in which we have been using the term. The fact that an individual is presented with certain traits and not presented with others makes it more likely that she will decide to identify with selections from the former set. We are more likely to buy from the items on display than we are to ask for custom work.

If this is correct, there is a special practical caution we might issue to those who would develop character in others by exemplarism. It is not only difficult to

¹⁵² Kamler, 146-47.

pretend at moral character, it is also extremely dangerous. Ryle has put this fact cogently.

Indeed, in matters of morality as distinct from techniques, good examples had better not be set with an edifying purpose. For such a would-be improving exhibition of, say, indignation would be an insincere exhibition; the vehemence of the denunciation would be a parent's, a pedagogue's or a pastor's histrionics. The example authentically set would be that of an edifyingly shamming indignation. So it would be less hazardous to reword Socrates' original question and ask not 'Can virtue be taught?' but 'Can virtue be learned?' and to think less about the tests and techniques of instruction and more about the tasks and puzzlements of growing up.¹⁵³

The pretense of good character undermines itself devastatingly. Students or children discovering the pretense, may, we hope, lose faith only in the pretender, but it seems unlikely that even the most idealistic student can maintain her faith in those who would teach her if pretense is all she ever sees. No one can feel safe identifying with a fake.

Our Authority Over Our Behavior

The capability to identify seems necessary to any attempt at self-determination with respect to moral character, but that is not to imply that our characters do not develop in ways that are not self-determined. If we think again of Mary, it seems that her identification was more an act of preserving or refining an aspect of her character rather than determining it in the usual sense of bringing about some noticeable change in the array of dispositions. She doesn't want to bring about change, but rather wants to resist alterations to her polite disposition. Mary engages herself in small ways to keep her politeness. As such, hers is

¹⁵³ Ryle, "Can Virtue" 446.

probably the more typical case of self-determination with respect to moral character. Jane, by contrast, wants to change her character for the better, and as such, her case will be used to investigate practical techniques for the more radical cases of self-determination which involve significant changes in the dispositional array. Using her hypothetical case, I hope to make more clear just how identification relates to character development, moral reasoning, and moral motivation. This does not imply, however, that Jane's case is different in kind from Mary's. In fact it is of the same kind, but of a much greater magnitude, and therefore more obvious.

Jane's problem does not lie in the area of moral reasoning. Nor is it accurate to say that it lies essentially in the area of conduct. As I remarked earlier, if it were possible for Jane to defend justice blindly, say in the fashion of someone hypnotized or suffering from a spasm, then we would not say that she had the character she wanted. Jane must, then, develop in herself the disposition which promotes justice in such a way as *she* is in the chain of agency for any act of moral courage in the promotion of justice. Likewise, she wants her disposition toward timidity to be weakened to the point where it does not lead to any action. Jane must master her dispositions in such a way as to lead to the patterns of behavior she wants. Jane wants to promote justice *from* or *out of* her character. She does not need, of course, to make her promotion of justice explicit to herself in order to do it out of her character, but she must be able to acknowledge that it is her character that explains some of her just activities.

It is possible to behave in ways that do not seem to come from our settled or dominant dispositions. That is, it is possible to behave, at least in certain instances, in ways that might surprise our acquaintances and perhaps please

ourselves. It is important to appreciate the distinction between our authority over a discrete act and the malleability of a disposition. We seem to have more direct authority over the former than over the latter, even if we attribute exerting the authority to unusual circumstances.

A case will make this more clear. Suppose that Herman, a college student living in an apartment away from home, is characteristically lazy. Throughout the academic year he does only the minimum to get by. His coursework is often mediocre as well as late; his apartment is littered with dirty clothes, books, and papers; he routinely sleeps until early afternoon. But one day his parents, who also happen to be his financiers, are scheduled to visit him and to attend some of his classes with him. In the days before their arrival, Herman begins to ingratiate himself with his professors. More, at the last minute, of course, Herman scours his apartment, filling the trash cans out back, vacuuming the floor, and cleaning the bathroom. It would not be accurate to say that Herman was characteristically industrious, and that this caused him to get his work done and to clean up. Rather, the best explanation has to do with the imminent visit.

All of this is, I think, common sense. But it illustrates an important distinction. It is relatively straightforward for people to modify behavior in such a way as to belie certain dispositions. Kupperman makes an allied point by recalling an example of Kant's: "Kant gives the example of someone who claims to be governed by uncontrollable lust: We ask him, if a gallows were erected and he was to be hanged immediately after gratification of his lust, could he not indeed control it?"¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Kupperman, *Character* 86.

Characters do not doom us to any particular way of acting, though they do make certain behaviors more likely. Indeed, this seems obvious to someone like Jane. Her identification against her timidity would indeed be futile if she did not, as a matter of psychological fact, believe that her disposition toward excessive timidity could be managed.

But putting in place this distinction between our authority over our dispositions and our authority over individual acts is not enough to put in place a character development scheme. If a situation is said to force certain sorts of behavior, then the desired behavior is not, in the sense that interests us, a product of a person's character, but rather it is a product of the situation. Were the gallows to disappear, the lustful character would remain.

In order to make the distinction of practical use we need to appreciate the transitivity between behavior and the dispositions that are inculcated through it. With this part of the scheme in place, we have enough to give Jane some reasonable chance of modifying her dispositions into closer harmony with her identifications. Jane could manipulate herself indirectly by altering her environment to include strong sanctions against timid behavior. If the sanctions are strong enough, and if she remains in her new environment for a sufficiently long period, she stands a good chance of developing a more courageous character. It might also be important for Jane to limit her options to leave that environment, at least for a while. If she senses that her unwelcome disposition is such a threat to the character she wants that the only way to alter it is by a severe alteration to her environment, then she should be aware that the same disposition might cause her to flee the new environment in order to be able to indulge her timidity once again. Recall my example from Chapter II, in which Jane joins the Marines. At first she would

behave less timidly because of her fear of situational factors, or perhaps because she simply does not have the time to be timid, but after her proficiency at courageous behavior is increased, she may find that she is acting from character rather than from the situational influences. Like Odysseus, Jane arranges her circumstances in such a way as to be forced to behave in accordance with her identification, and against her otherwise overwhelming disposition to behave timidly. Like Cortes, she has burned her ships behind her to preclude turning back in accordance with her unwelcome disposition, no matter how difficult the task ahead appears.

The more interesting case is Herman's. While Jane, having already identified with the weak disposition to promote justice, needs help only with modifying her dispositional array, Herman has neither a disposition toward nor an identification with industriousness. His parents' visit is unlikely to result in any alterations in character, whatever changes it might bring about in behavior. Herman needs to experience the attraction of industriousness in order to make his identification with that disposition more likely. While it is possible that he would enjoy his clean house and fresh start so much that he might continue to behave industriously until he became habituated to it, and identify with his emerging industrious disposition, it seems unlikely that an isolated instance of industrious behavior would be enough to bring about such habituation, and identification. If he were to join with Jane in the Marines, where laziness would result in severe sanctions, then Herman might be more likely to become industrious in character and not just in act. But it also seems he may resolve to do as little as possible, and to resist any change in his character just out of spite. Herman must do his own identifying. We must be careful not to expect too much.

But, while it may be appropriate only to hope regarding Herman, it would be appropriate to have confidence in Jane. Jane identifies with her disapproval of her timidity. Hence, it is reasonable to say that, if Jane were to enter a program in which she behaved in a particular way because of fear of sanction, but wished that she would behave that way without help, then we could say that her inculcation of courage through doing courageous acts did indeed result in the development of character. Herman, by contrast, may never identify with industriousness, and if he does not, his industrious behavior results not from virtue, but from the situation.

The Role of Moral Reasoning

We are now in a better position to appreciate the role reason in general, and good moral reasoning in particular, can play at the practical level in the development of character. Reason can assist Jane in perceiving and describing her dispositions to herself. More, it might help her predict the consequences of certain sorts of identifications, as well as help her plot a plan of self-improvement. Good reasoning, we might say, gives Jane a head start on developing the character she wants. This can occur at two levels. The first level is normative. Good moral reason can enable Jane to formulate a picture of the person she should be. This highlights the importance of developing our moral reasoning skills. Education in specifically moral reasoning might enable some persons to identify more deliberately and intelligently than they might have otherwise. Moral reasoning can help make clear what a decent moral character is. It can provide a vocabulary for understanding the general principles that underlie our moral motivations, and as such render them more manageable. Jane's ethics classes help her to understand more fully just why it is that she should side with her disposition to promote moral courage even in the face of her timidity. She has a way of explaining her moral

motivation to herself. More, she may become sensitive to moral aspects of matters where she was blind previously. And facility in explicit moral reasoning lets Jane evaluate her own character in the light of moral theory. For example, moral reasoning can help Jane understand how strongly she should develop her disposition to promote justice.

The second level is that of practical descriptive psychology. Jane, having properly described her timidity to herself as an impediment to her promoting justice, has an advantage over someone who is unaware of what it is that forms the impediment. If Jane's good reason can help her understand the nature of her problem, then she has a head start on doing something about it as a practical matter. Reason can facilitate taking herself in hand to ameliorate the unwelcome disposition. If she is aware of the Aristotelian thesis that habituation can be used to modify dispositions over time, she can formulate a plan of practical self-determination. This may involve her making a point of practicing behaving more courageously, or it may even lead her to submit herself to some program, such as Outward Bound, which is designed in part to force her to behave less timidly with the aim of bringing about a weakening in Jane's timid disposition. Depending upon the depth of her concern about her timidity, and a host of other factors as well, Jane may indeed become a Marine. Such a decision is not particularly unusual, even if it is more obvious in Jane's case than in more ordinary cases. We often, as Kupperman points out, make choices which have an influence on the long-term development of our characters. "We do often have control over circumstances that will gradually mold or reshape our characters: These include what college we attend, what kind of person we marry (if we marry), and what kind of career we

aim for."¹⁵⁵ While not perfect, a well-developed reasoning capability is probably the best tool we have to assist us in making these choices, which may ultimately have great influence over the person we become.

Facility in moral reasoning is not essential to a good character, but it is extremely nice to have if one would develop and maintain a decent moral character. It can help us avoid pitfalls, and it can help us formulate goals that serve to guide the subsequent development of our characters. But its function is as a guide. It can show the way, but it does not move us along it. Nevertheless, if we are interested in what sort of moral character we wish to develop, the counsels of reason are the best counsels we have.

Summary of Identification and Character Development

I have argued that neither moral knowledge nor moral reasoning skills are sufficient for the development of character. Good cognition, in other words, is not good character. I have claimed, with Aristotle, that dispositions may be inculcated or weakened through the tactic of behaving as though one had a disposition that one is seeking to inculcate. I have argued further that such behavior can foster identification with the dispositions ingrained by it. This is because we learn the value of certain sorts of dispositions most fully by experiencing behaving as though we had them. I have suggested that we can learn the value of certain dispositions by seeing them in others, and that this too might foster our identification with them. I have proposed that someone like Jane can modify her dispositions through practice, even if that practice begins as a result of situational factors. I have

¹⁵⁵ Kupperman, *Character* 57-58.

suggested that the same thing is possible for someone who does not identify with some worthy disposition, but that, while it may be possible to force certain sorts of behavior, the value of a worthy disposition can only be learned. As such, it is appropriate to speak only of fostering identification in others, not of inculcating it, and it is a mistake to expect too much from a character development effort. I concluded by arguing that moral reasoning has an important role to play in character development, but that this role is essentially advisory. That is, reason can help us map out the character we want, and it can help map out a plan to acquire it, but having good reason does not equate to having good character.

If fostering character development is to be taken seriously, we must become good at fostering morally worthy identification, not just cognitive proficiencies. Indeed, if those cognitive proficiencies are to be put to their best use, it seems that putting them to use in self-determinative efforts to improve the self is as good a place as any to start.

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